



2dartist.

131

Issue 131 | November 2016

Vibrant new worlds

Eduardo Pena discusses his passion for art and showcases his personal universe projects

plus

- Bold and striking illustration
- **The beautiful violence of nature**
- Expressive character sketches
- **Speed paint a street cleaner mech**
- Reinvent Hercules in a cyberpunk scene
- **and much more!**

Editor's Letter



ANNIE MOSS
Junior Editor

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Instagram!**

Welcome to 2dartist issue 131!

In this issue you will find plenty of inspiration in our interviews with Eduardo Pena, Joel Kilpatrick, and traditional artist Lauren Marx. We also take a look at the characterful sketches of Yewon Park, a concept artist at Blizzard Entertainment.

Learn how to speed paint a street cleaning mech with Galan Pang, and create a costume design for a sci-fi butler with Albert Urmanov. See how Klaus Pillion reinvents a Herculean tale into a cyberpunk scene, and follow as Zac Retz reveals how to approach daytime and night-time plein air studies of an industrial environment. Also discover how Alexandre Chaudret painted his vampire countess character, and learn how Florian de Gesincourt created a light filled fantasy environment!

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GALAN PANG

Galan Pang is currently the concept art director of a Shanghai based videogame studio. He has previously worked on various AAA console, mobile, and VR projects.



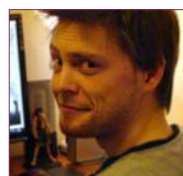
KLAUS PILLION

Freelance concept artist and illustrator Klaus Pillion graduated in 3D production before focusing on his primary love: 2D artwork. Largely self-taught, he has worked professionally since 2013 for games and movies.



ZAC RETZ

Zac Retz graduated with a BFA in illustration in 2012. Since then he has illustrated the children's book *Too Much Glue*, worked at Workinman Interactive, Reel FX, and currently works for Sony Pictures Animation.



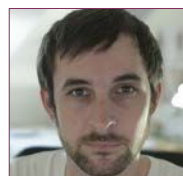
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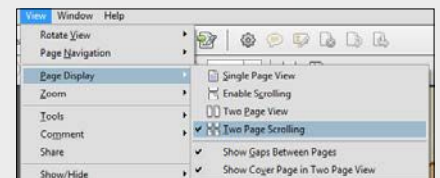
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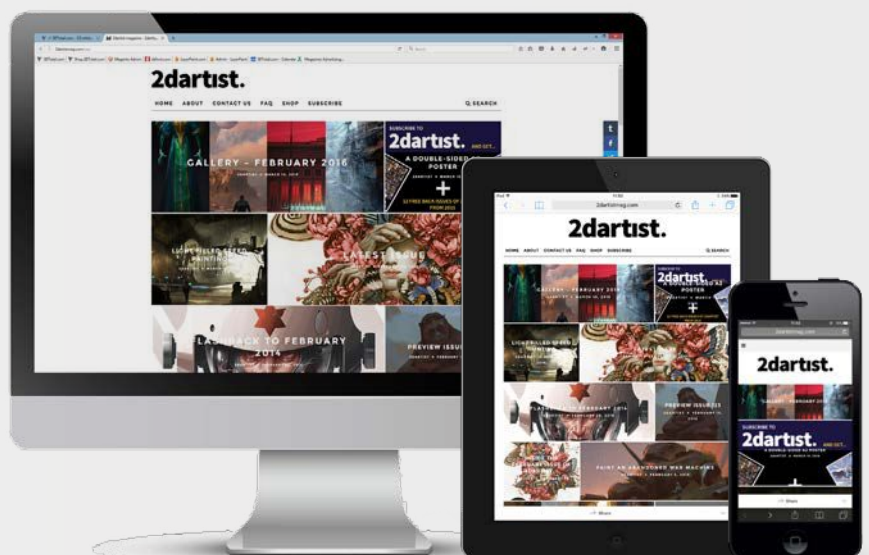
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The Artist



Eduardo Pena

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Interviewed by:

Annie Moss

Eduardo Pena is a storyteller, culture lover and traveler originally from Colombia. He currently works with institutions like The One Academy, Weta, and Lucasfilm, and collaborates on urban development and design sustainability projects.

Vibrant new worlds

Explore the bright, experimental artworks of Eduardo Pena's personal universes and learn about his extensive passion for art and culture ▶



Eduardo Pena is an artist with a true, all-embracing passion for his work. He describes himself as a creative, a builder, and a story-teller, and this enthusiasm for invention can be seen particularly clearly in the artwork he creates for his personal universes. As a natural explorer and a culture lover Eduardo enjoys exploring both the world around him and creating fresh, vibrant scenes based on his experiences. Always looking for personal growth he also treats failures as experiments which give him opportunities to learn and develop as an artist. Here Eduardo tells us about his love of art and culture, how his students at The One Academy inspire him, and working on his impulses...

2dartist: Hi Eduardo, thank you for talking to 2dartist! Can you kick things off by telling us a little bit about yourself and your work?

Eduardo Pena: I consider myself a student of life; I am amazed by the simplicity and randomness of events. Throughout my career I have learned ways of understanding my own passions and priorities: how to grow as a professional, as an artist, and as human being.

Time and technology has brought us a constant set of tools that allow us to perform certain tasks efficiently, but essential processes are left behind. So in some ways the nature of my personal work is not entirely attached to trends or specific products. I leave that behavior at work where it is needed for the industrial process.

In my personal work I try to explore similar subjects, but explain different values with those universes, exploring ways of using the toolset to develop and build interesting, surreal worlds.

2da: Storytelling is really important in your work, how do you ensure there is a clear sense of narrative in your work?

EP: I consider that a must. I am a fan of etymology, semiotics and narrative. To apply those elements to the foundations of every piece I need time; time to do research, time to explore, and time to understand what I am doing.

Of course, in my profession, that is a luxury, because in production work there is not much transcendental art. Therefore, I leave that luxury mostly for my personal work, where I can think and make interesting choices and experiments. This allows me to develop a story, or at least build some narrative across the piece, and also gives me room to fail as a learning experience. Failing is then replaced by expansion. ►

● Is there a banana around here? From *CHIMBO* a personal universe Eduardo is creating of a gorilla lost in the galaxy





2da: What made you want to pursue a career in the digital art industry?

EP: The fact that I can still think like a ten year old but have the skills of a trained artist, so that was, and still is, very tempting and inspiring to me. In our times we are able to experiment with more diverse and exiting universes or creative possibilities. In some way we can shape people's imaginations.

2da: What are your preferred tools to work with and why?

EP: I like to work with my impulses as some of them help me to make interesting decisions. So my main tool is my imagination. I try to ignore the noise of social media, trends, and the fear of failure, and simply allow myself to explore. I have fun, and honor my gift. I find reading books and traveling helps to improve and nurture my knowledge of culture and of myself. It helps to diversify and expand the way I experience things, and that is where knowledge becomes wisdom. Physical tools, such as a camera, help to improve my understanding of light, composition, narrative and of course educate the eye to aesthetic values. I also watch all sorts of movies and games to understand how design and art is applied on the final product.

2da: Are there any tools, techniques or software you would like to explore in the future, and why?

EP: Any tools that help me to expand my knowledge are more than welcome. Technology assists us during the creative process, allowing us to experiment and be open to the constant change.

For example we see virtual and augmented reality as possible new ways for developing interesting paths of interaction and all sorts of entertainment. They will constantly change the way we experiment with interactive spaces in museums, cinemas, videogames and so on.

2da: Which artist, or group of artists, particularly inspire your work?

EP: My students, who are always willing to listen, learn and share with me all sorts of ideas. And people who are always in constant change and challenging the conventions; to build a better self. I am inspired by working with them on exciting projects.

2da: If you could meet any artist (past or present) what would you ask them and why? ►





EP: I would ask him or her to come with me to the present, and then we could work together to find ways of making art. We could create the art that helps to sculpt a healthy society, the art that provokes an emotional response, and interesting thoughts, and why not, the art that can function to industry standards.

2da: Where (and when) do you feel you are at your most creative?

EP: When I am talking and sharing. I feel a nirvana of creative possibilities.

2da: Artist block is a problem for many creative people. Can you share a couple of tips you use when the inspiration stops flowing?

EP: Let it flow. It is a natural thing that we are not in a position to control. I guess for me personally I shut down a lot of external distractions and pay ►



PRO TIP

Personal work

Honor your personal work, and do not mix many industry standards into your personal work. Enjoy the luxury of developing something interesting and valuable to your creativity, with more time. Do lots of experiments and training, but give a proper treatment to the ones that deserve your time and true self.



● A scene from *The Wizard Anthologies of the forgotten rider*



● The forest scout from Eduardo's fantasy realms called *The W*





● A scene from the story of *CHIMBO* and the beginnings of his galactic journey

attention to the simple things that are “happening” in my here and now. So I see and perceive a lot of incredible things in the most unusual, simple things. I focus my attention in the magic that surrounds us.

2da: What has been the project you have most enjoyed working on?

EP: The most exiting one for me was when I worked very hard learning other languages (English and French) in order to find opportunities outside of my country. I put my all into finding a chance to work in the industry, when the possibilities in my country where zero. Those times when I challenged myself to the limit. In other places some opportunities and circumstances are taken for granted. I had to work hard for those, so I really enjoyed that.

2da: What initial steps do you take when you are first given a brief for a new project? Do you dive straight in or do you have a more analytical process?

EP: It is very relative to what the brief is about, and the tools and timing I have been given. Most of the

time you are given almost no time, so you have to value your experience to organize how much time you spend analyzing, researching and making a qualified, good-looking and functional product.

2da: How do you keep yourself motivated when working on a difficult project?

EP: I remind myself of what is truly important. I will not compromise my health or my natural needs for work, so it must be a fun job. When work becomes very stressful I change my habits and come back enjoying the craft with fresh eyes. I go out to do some exercise, socialize with people, play guitar or anything that is completely different.

I like this job; it just needs me to be properly organized during the day. Nobody forced me to work on this; I do this because I love it. It is just a matter of remembering that you can have fun even on a rainy day.

2da: When you are not working hard on your art, what do you like to do with your time? ►



● A scene from the *CHIMBO* adventures, when he is leaving Ed





● A tribute to the beautiful country of Vietnam and its amazing food



EP: Travel, interact, read, share, enjoy the moment, drink or eat something in the middle of nowhere and see things happen. Enjoy things that I can only own for myself by investing in experiences.

2da: Finally, where will we be able to see your work next? Are there any projects we should look out for?

EP: I would love to sow the seed of inspiration in younger generations, to help build something that gives them space and time to create and heal social failures through their work. Hopefully I will work on fewer products (games or movies) which promote war, fear, violence and destruction. I want to produce more elements for entertainment that promotes positive values.

2da: If you could write a letter to your younger self, just starting out as an artist, what advice would you give?

EP: I would make an amazing piece of illustration to inspire me. The image would do an amazing job with my emotions.

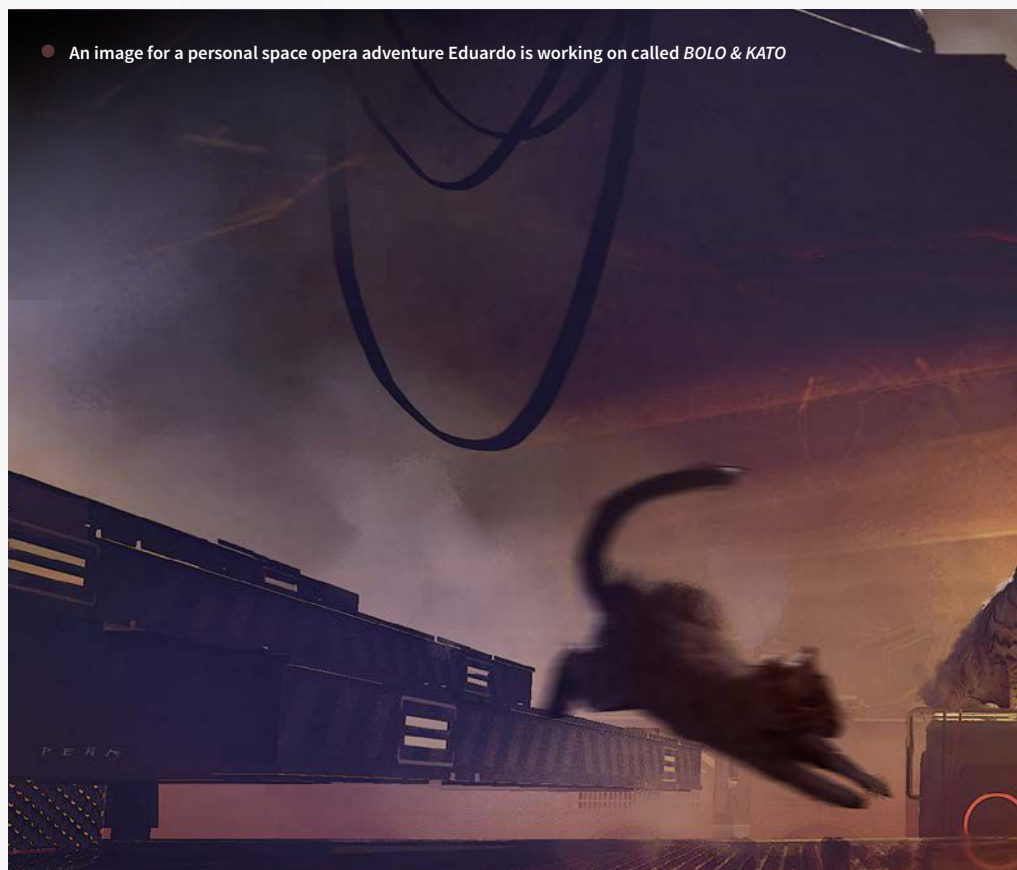
2da: What do you think has been most influential to your career success?

EP: Passion!

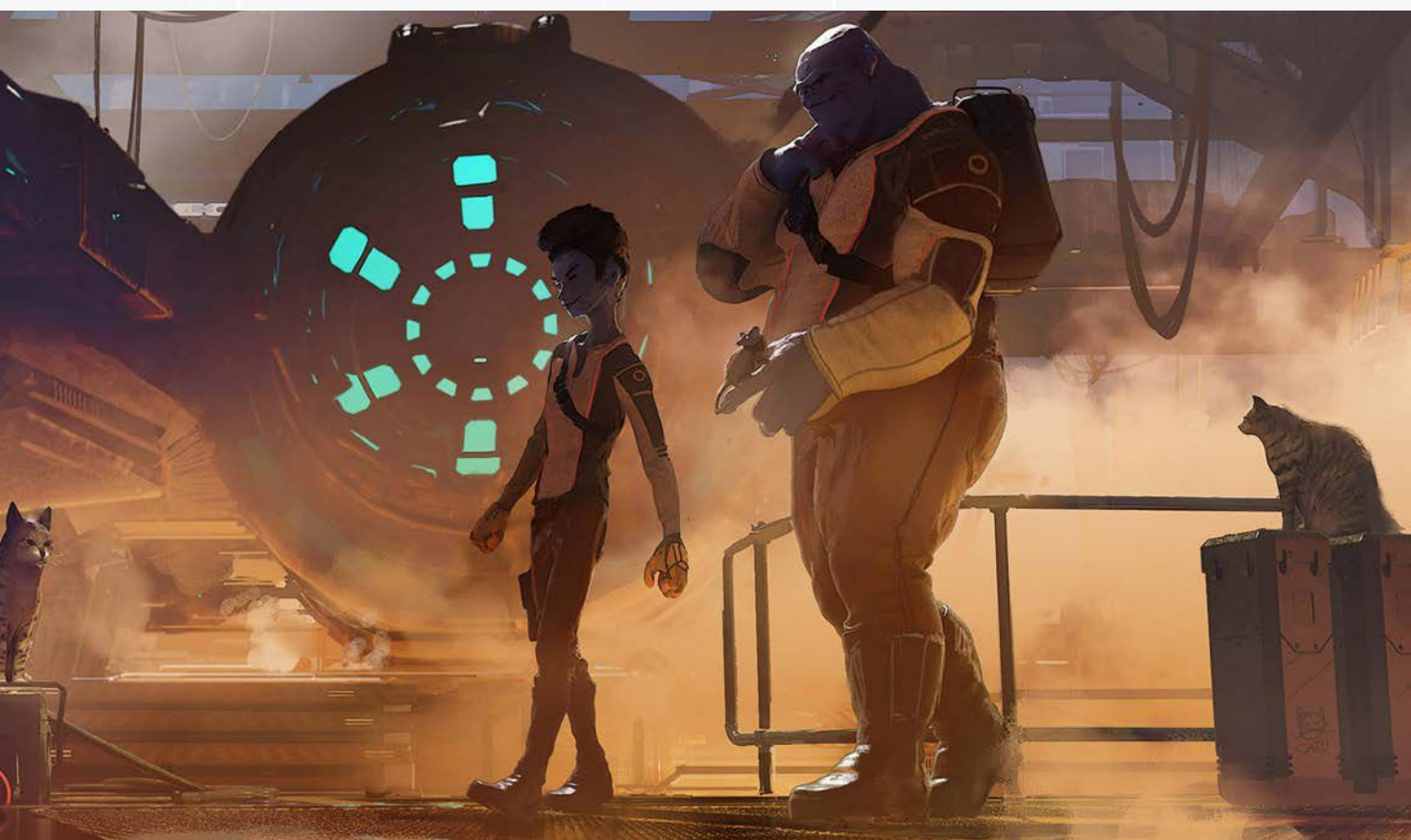
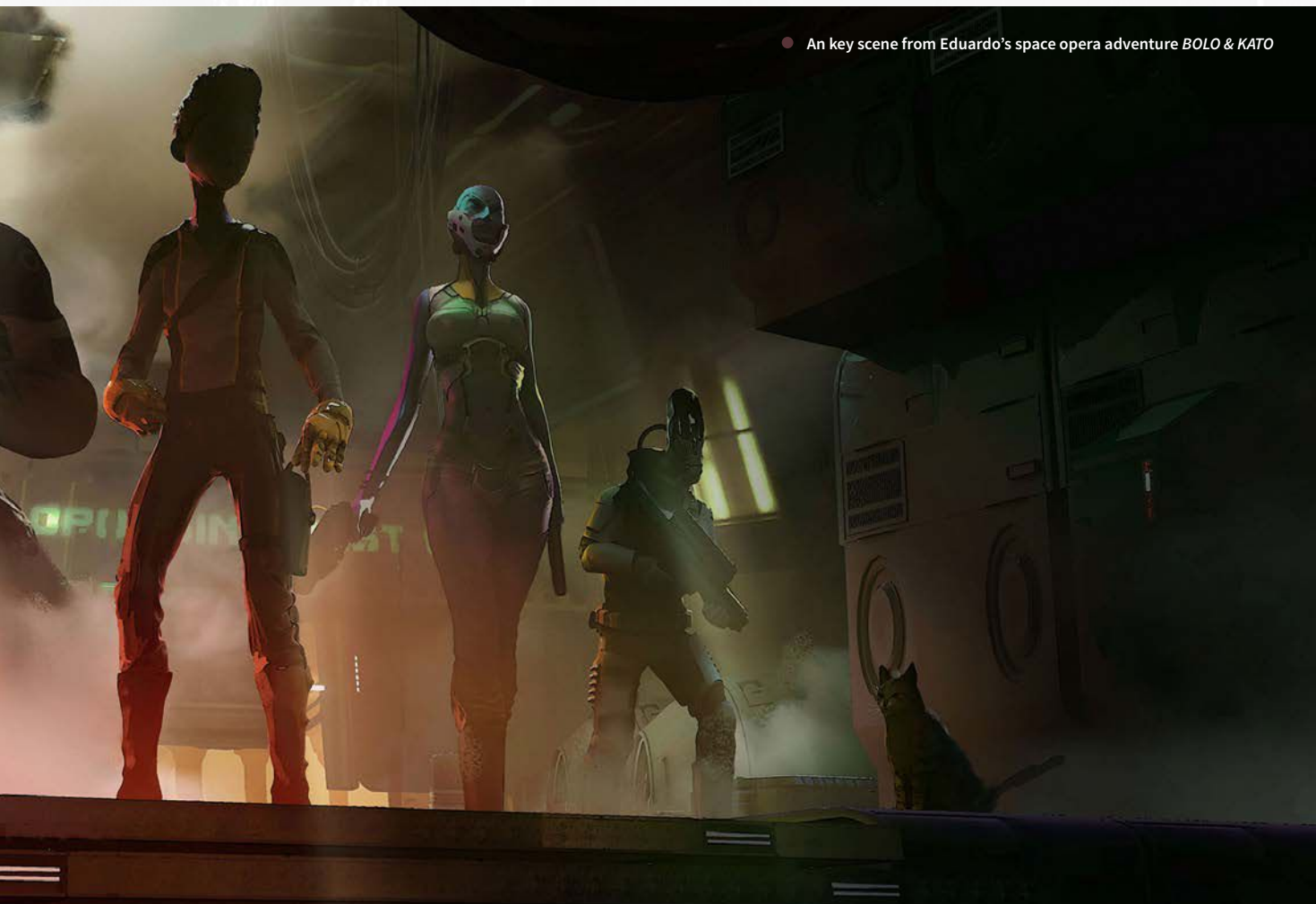
2da: Is there anything you think budding artists should try to avoid?

EP: Fear and fear of failure. The feeling that they are in a race or in a Darwinian experiment. Things are changing all the time, so just enjoy the ride and believe more in your inner thoughts. Do not let the external noise shape the path of your real passions. Honor your gifts by using them for yourself and others.

Thank you Eduardo for talking to 2dartist! ●



● An key scene from Eduardo's space opera adventure *BOLO & KATO*



The Artist



Joel Kilpatrick
joel-kilpatrick.com

Interviewed by:
Annie Moss

Joel Kilpatrick is a freelance illustrator based in Manchester, UK. He started drawing at the age of seven after watching the first of the *Lord of the Rings* films and hasn't stopped.

Bold and striking illustrations

We speak to British illustrator, Joel Kilpatrick, about his inspirations and keeping motivated ▶





Joel Kilpatrick is a freelance illustrator based in Manchester, UK. In 2011, he read an interview with Weta's Gus Hunter, where he talked about using a graphics tablet to create digital. This simple interview led Joel down the path to digital painting and he hasn't looked back!

2dartist: Hi Joel, thanks for talking to *2dartist*! Could you start by introducing yourself a bit to the readers?

Joel Kilpatrick: Hi! Thank you very much for having me. I'm a freelance illustrator from Greater Manchester in the UK. I've done some work in various books and I am very fond of dogs!

"Black and white values are a very important part of conveying good lighting in your image"

2da: Your works have a really distinctive style, often with bright colors and striking light effects. Do you have any tips for readers who want to recreate this in their own work?

JK: Black and white values are a very important part of conveying good lighting in your image. It's easy to lose track of your initial lighting idea when you get carried away with painting.

When I am struggling with the lighting in a painting, I find it useful to copy and merge all of my layers into a new layer and convert it to black and white. I then zoom out so the details are out of focus and start painting roughly on top by blocking in the lights and shadows, and defining the silhouettes; I try to think about rim lights, bounce lights and so on. If I compare this paintover with the original black and white image, I can see a massive difference in the readability of the piece. I can use this as a rough guide to make improvements. I use Photoshop for digital painting, but this can be applied to other programs as well.

If you look at your painting in black and white while zoomed out, and you can't tell what the focal point is, then that's your starting point on improving the piece. You want the viewer's attention to be instantly drawn to the focal points of your painting, and should make them stand out by giving them the most contrasting areas. This doesn't always apply, but it is helpful to think about if you're stuck.

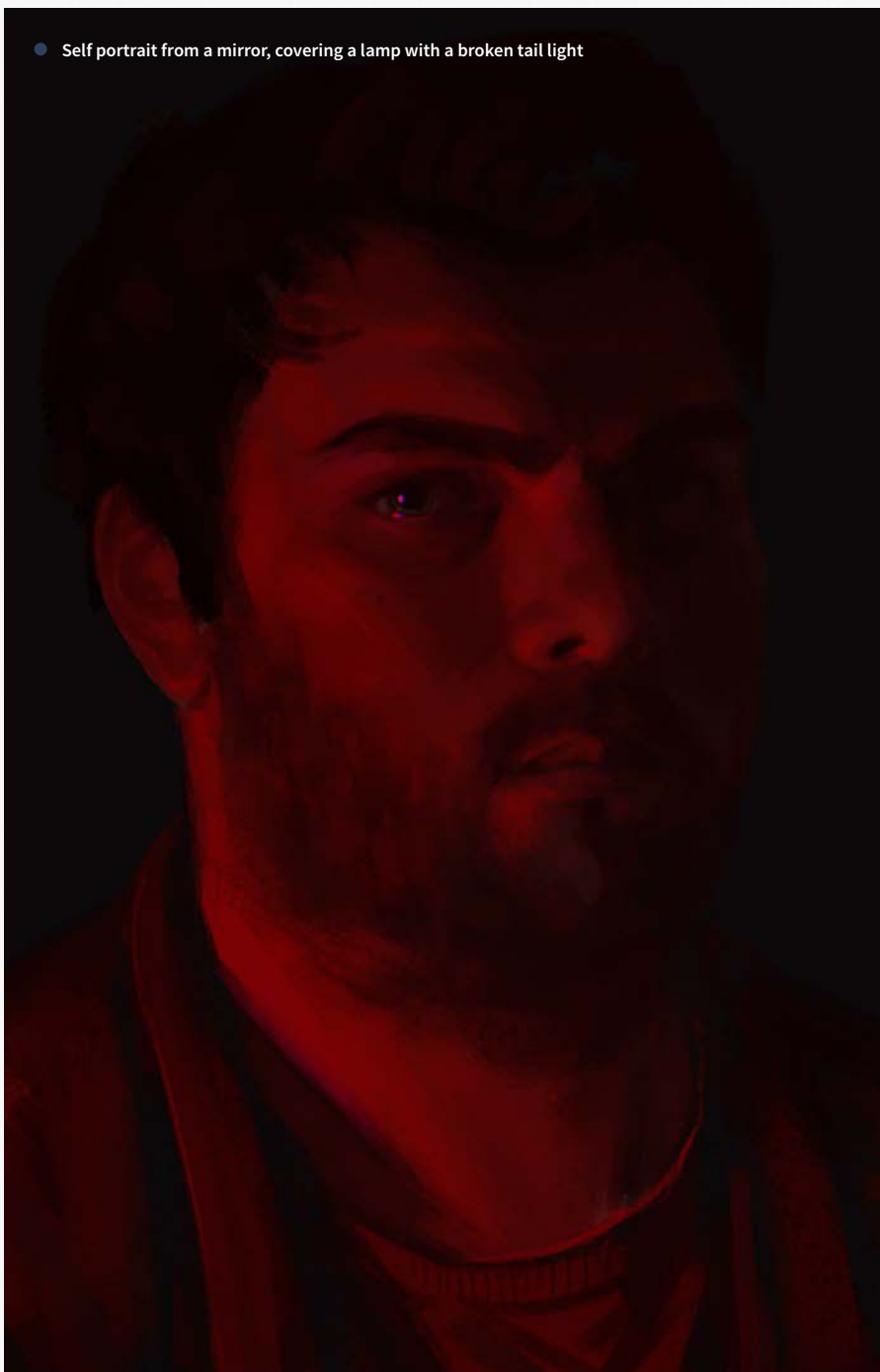
2da: Where do you find inspiration for your work? Which other artists do you particularly admire?

JK: Films are a huge source of inspiration for me. *No Country for Old Men*, *Blade Runner*, *District 9*, and *Drive* are some of my absolute favorites. I feel the same about books; I thoroughly enjoy Arthur C. Clarke and Douglas Adams – *The Hitchhiker's Guide* series is probably one of the most enjoyable reading experiences I've had. I'm also a lifelong fan of Tolkien; I was raised in a very *Lord of the Rings* loving home.

As for artists I admire, I look up to Dan LuVisi, he's a trailblazer, and I find his work ethic and attitude towards art really motivating. Two other incredible artists I also admire are Faraz Shanyar and Simon Stålenhag. I wouldn't be able to do their work justice describing it, so I definitely recommend checking them out.

2da: If you could meet any artist (past or present) what would you ask them and why?

JK: John Martin was an English painter born in the 1700s and he is someone I would very much like to have a conversation with. The mighty apocalyptic scale in his paintings is absolutely incredible, I've never seen an artist who is able to convey such absolute cataclysmic destruction the way he did. I would love to see all the sketches, studies, and preparatory work he did for each of his paintings. I'd ask him about his particular ►



● Self portrait from a mirror, covering a lamp with a broken tail light



influences and motivations, to get an insight into such an extensive imagination. I've been lucky enough to see one of his works in real life and I hope I get to see more in the future.

2da: What are your preferred tools to work with? Are there any tools you find yourself using again and again?

JK: I started out with an old copy of Photoshop Elements 4, and have stayed with Photoshop ever

since. I've tried other programs but Photoshop just seems to work the best for me, and it covers everything that I could need. I have a rudimentary knowledge of SketchUp which is quite useful, as I find it great for looking at objects from varying angles, which leads to a better understanding of what I am drawing. If you don't have the free time to spend learning a new program, you can always use the 3D Warehouse website to search for the reference item you need and use the basic 3D viewer to move it about. This is incredibly useful if

you're drawing complicated things such as guns and cars, as you can get a reference for the exact angle you need rather than having to guess. Daz Studio is also good for the same reason, to see how figures look in different poses at varying angles.

2da: Which tools and software would like to learn in the future?

JK: I would love to learn to use advanced 3D software as that seems to be involved in a lot of

● Viola



work. It looks quite daunting and intimidating, but so was Photoshop in the beginning. I'd really like to see how it could improve my efficiency when creating finished paintings at a faster pace. Seeing the speed that artists can generate multiple ideas and compositions with 3D is a huge motivating factor. ZBrush and 3D-Coat also look like a lot of fun to work with.

2da: What do you most enjoy about working on a new project?

JK: The planning stage is what I usually enjoy most. When you're completely uncommitted to any single idea and you can just explore; you can do endless sketching and note taking, thinking of all the possible things you could do.

Something that I enjoy almost as much as actually painting, is trying to find a song or piece of music that fits the mood of the piece. This comes from my love of film soundtracks; they add so much to the atmosphere of the film and you never forget

a great one. The music I find often influences how the painting progresses, as I'm trying to express the feeling that the music portrays. ►

“When you're completely uncommitted to any single idea and you can just explore; you can do endless sketching and note taking, thinking of all the possible things you could do”



2da: Are there any other areas in the art world that you'd like to branch into and why?

JK: I would like to pursue game illustration, as well as getting in to book cover design. You are always told not to judge a book by its cover but that is literally what they are for, they make you want to buy that book.

I still remember the first time a book cover made an impact on me. I read Arthur Conan Doyle's The

Lost World when I was around nine years old; it had this fantastic painting of a dinosaur on the cover. I spent a lot of time drawing the characters and scenes, trying to capture that feeling I got from the cover. This is the reason I'd like to work on book covers, I want my work to impact and influence others.

2da: What initial steps do you take when you take on a new project? Do you dive straight into sketching or do you have a more analytical process? ►

Joel's significant artwork

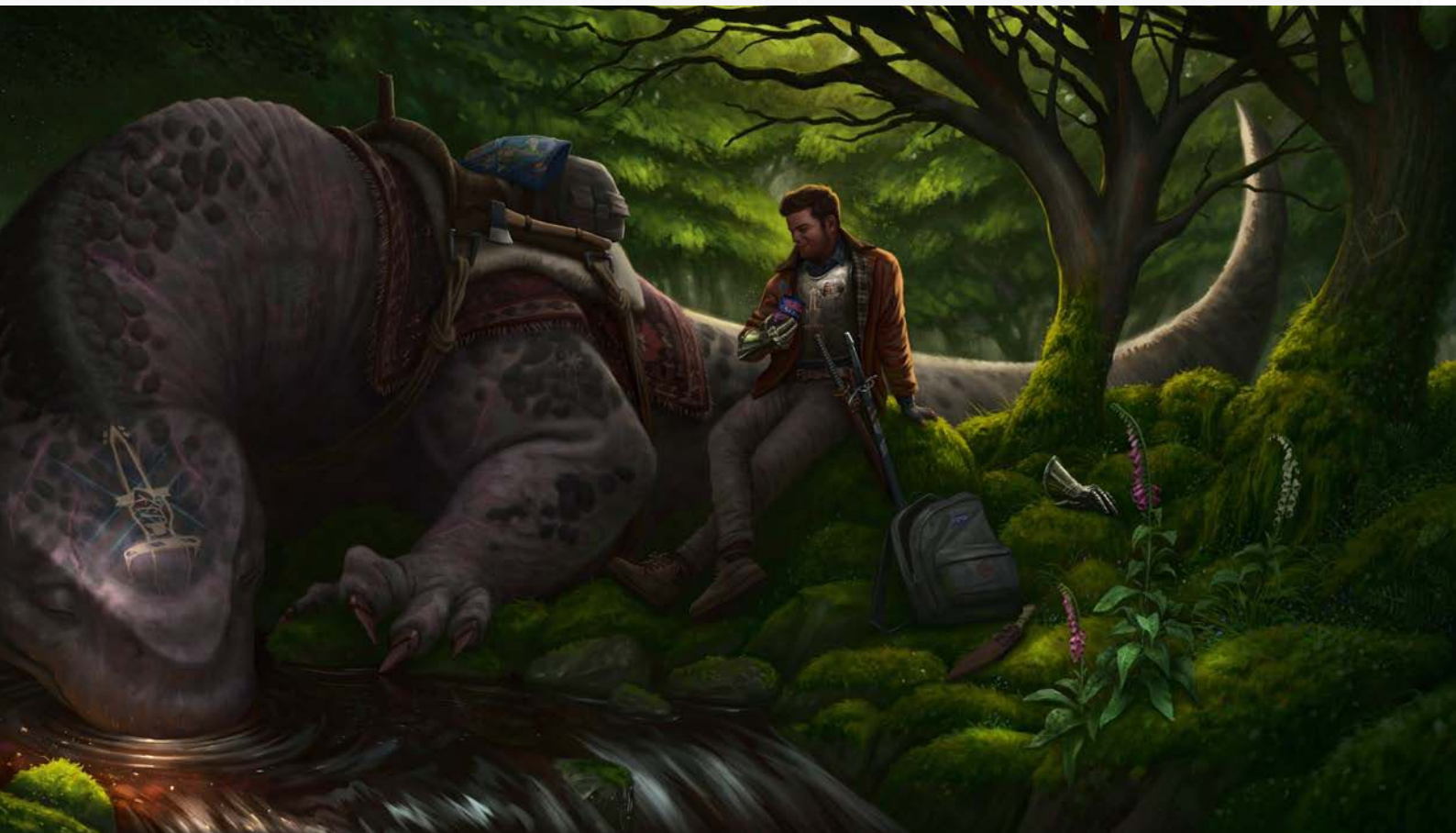
I did this drawing in early 2002 when I was seven; it was a little while after first watching *Fellowship of the Ring*. That film changed my little brain forever; I was completely obsessed and was drawing the characters constantly. It was like an explosion of inspiration for me, I had never seen anything like it. I had forgotten all about the drawings until recently when my Dad told me he had kept them all. Seeing them again reminded me how much of an impact the *Lord of the Rings* films had on my creativity. I picked this drawing as it represented the part of me that was just excited to draw for the love and fun of it and it is a part of me I never want to lose. I'd like to be a good example to the seven year old me, and be an artist that he would look up to.



● Still Life



● Stream







● Dwarves

JK: Before I do any sketching I usually write out a lot of key words and fill a page with all my thoughts and ideas based around the idea. I highlight the words that definitely wouldn't make it to the final painting. This might seem counter-intuitive but you may discover things that you wouldn't have thought of if you'd only been looking in the one direction. Start as chaotic as possible, and refine as you go. From this stage I move on to sketching out the rough designs and thumbnails. It's all about exploration and ideation, getting down as many different ideas down as I can think of, before settling on one.

2da: Do you have any tricks or tips to keep yourself motivated on a difficult project?

JK: Something I find fun and motivating when working on a character based painting is to imagine it as a scene from a film. What are the characters saying to each other? What are their names? What are their relations to each other? What lead them to getting into this situation?

I think about the moment just before the snapshot of the scene and the moment just after, as well as some possible dialogue. This helps me especially when I'm feeling unmotivated about the lack of story in my work, or if I'm struggling to think of ideas. This will really help put a lot more story into your piece, as you'll be actively thinking about your characters in depth, and you might think of something new to add to the scene.

Motivation seems to be about pacing. Don't burn yourself out right at the beginning, as you'll have a pretty unpleasant experience and you won't be too interested in carrying on the work. If all else fails, you can listen to the most motivational song ever created, *Bring it all back* by S Club 7!

2da: Artist block is a problem for many creative people. Can you share a couple of tips you use when the inspiration stops flowing?

JK: Artist block can be awful. If you're on a tight deadline you may not have the luxury of time, but sometimes it's best to just stop for a little bit. You'll lose progress, but you'll more than make up for this when you come back to the work with a fresh perspective. Give your brain a break.

Something that has been particularly helpful to me when I have artist block is doing studies; I set up a still life arrangement on my desk and paint it, or set up a mirror next to my monitor and do a self portrait. ►

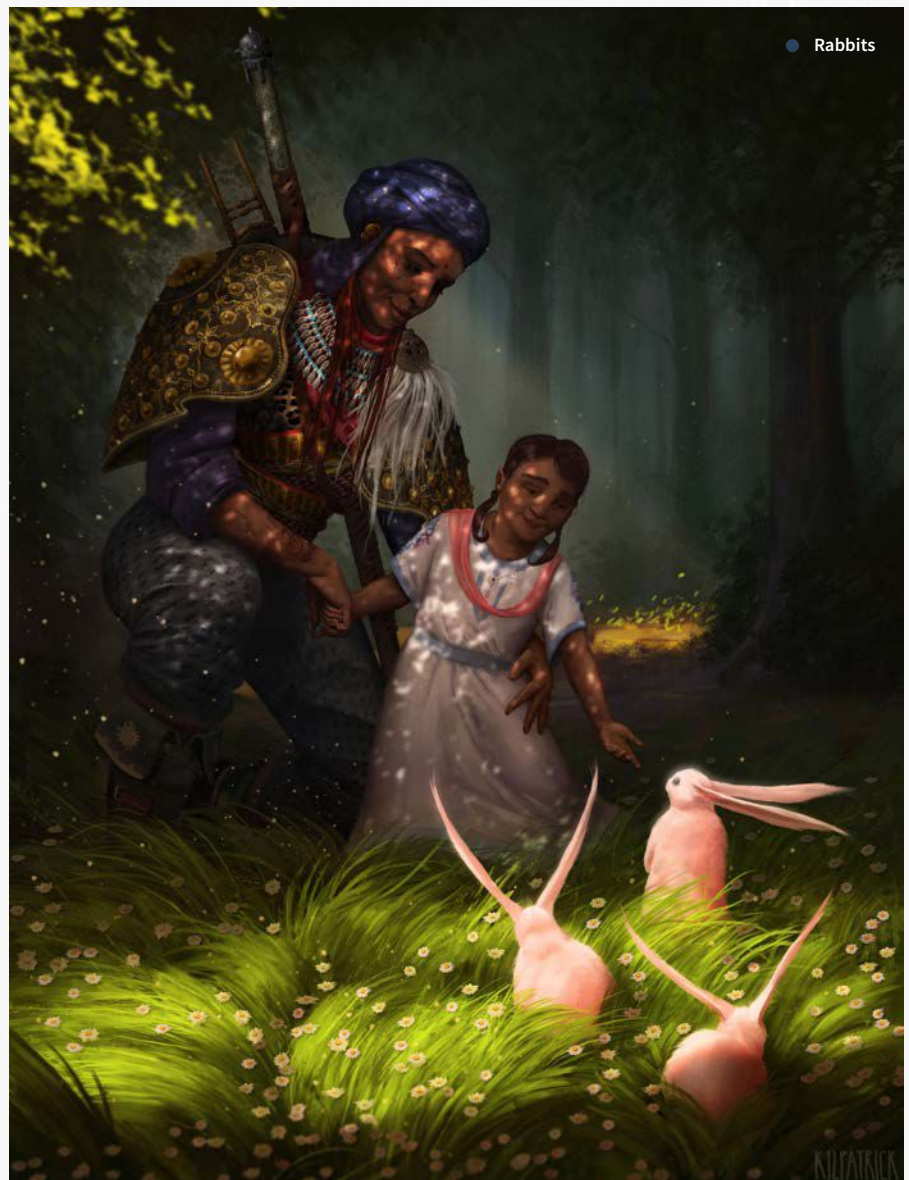
⚡ PRO TIP

The truth hurts

Painfully honest critiques, from people you trust, are some of the most valuable things you can receive as an artist. Ask someone for their completely unbiased, honest opinion, and prepare yourself for some hard truths. However, also know that they have your best interests at heart and don't take it personally.

The most personally brutal critique on my work I've ever had was mercilessly given by a loved one. I suppose it could have been said in a nicer way to spare my feelings, but I don't think it would have had the same effect and while it wasn't very enjoyable at the time, it's probably the most honest and straight to the point critique I've ever received. The painting benefited massively from it, and I still think about it now.

I also find it beneficial to show someone a picture I'm working on, without any context, and ask them to tell me what they think is happening. If they have no idea what's going on in the image, then I know I have some big changes to make to the readability of the story in the painting. Sometimes the most helpful advice comes from people that aren't necessarily artists, as they're looking at it from an outsider perspective.





This is a very productive thing to do when you have artist block, as you don't have to be thinking up compositions or character designs, you're simply going back to the basics and learning. Plus you'll still be making progress with your painting skill too, rather than just waiting around for inspiration.

“Games can be quite a big distraction for me, but they are also a big source of inspiration”

2da: When you're not working hard on your art, what do you like to do with your time?

JK: Usually things that let me be as far from a computer as possible. I really like going to the cinema and countryside walks! I also love playing games; I particularly enjoy historical ones, such as those based in World War 2. I really like being immersed in the setting and themes of the time period. I admire and appreciate the massive amount of historical research, detail, and care that the studio teams put into their games. I'm also a huge fan of the *Hitman* and *Fallout* games.

Games can be quite a big distraction for me, but they are also a big source of inspiration. When playing, I spend hours admiring all the interesting designs and environments that a team of very dedicated and passionate people have spent a very long time creating.

2da: And finally, what should we look out for from you in the future?

JK: As a freelancer, the future is both unknown and exciting, and that makes it all the more fun to find out. I am currently open for new work, and I'm



● Time to Leave

eager to explore different styles and methods to continually push myself out of my comfort zone.

2da: What made you want to pursue a career in the digital art industry?

JK: Watching *The Lord of the Rings* films, seeing Alan Lee and John Howe's drawings, and all the behind the scenes footage made it absolutely clear to me that I wanted to do something art related with my life. I have always loved drawing and painting, but until 2011 I was completely oblivious to digital art. One day I was reading a Weta Workshop

interview with Gus Hunter, where he mentioned that he used a graphics tablet for his art. I had no idea what it was, but I was desperate to learn more. This led me to finding Dan LuVisi's work on Deviant Art and when I had reached the point of no return, I absolutely had to learn digital painting. ●

Thank you Joel for talking to 2dartist!

The Artist



Joel Kilpatrick
joel-kilpatrick.com

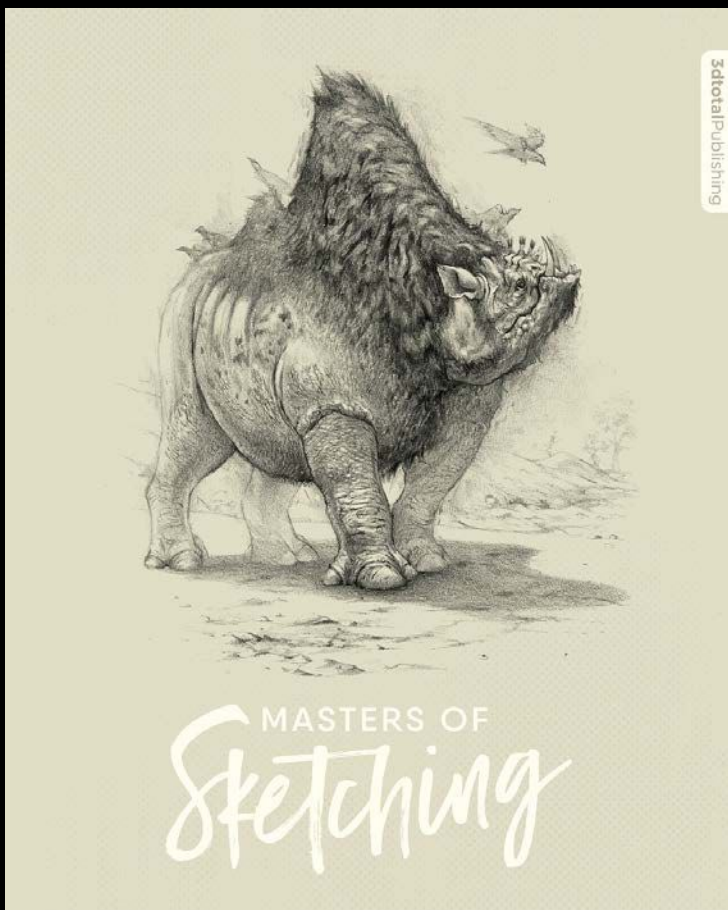


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Lauren Marx
laurenmarx.com

Lauren Marx graduated from Webster University, Missouri, USA, in 2014 with a Bachelors of Fine Arts, with an emphasis on drawing, focusing on animal-based pen and ink illustration. She currently resides in St. Louis, Missouri.

A R T I S T S P O T L I G H T

The beautiful violence of nature

We speak to Lauren Marx about her beautifully savage imagery that explores the interconnectivity of life ▶

Delve in to the dark world of Lauren Marx...

2dartist: Hello Lauren! Thanks for talking to 2dartist. First off, could you introduce yourself with a bit about your background and projects?

Lauren Marx: Thank you so much for interviewing me! I currently live (and grew up) in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. I received my BFA in 2014 at a local university, Webster University. I began my current “style” in 2012 during my second year of undergraduate studies. I now work on my art full-time in an attempt to push myself and my work. Currently I am working on my upcoming solo show at the Corey Helford Gallery, Los Angeles, in November. My work revolves around the beautiful violence of nature and uses interacting plants, animals, fungi, and insects. All of my pieces are created mainly using pen and ink on paper.

2da: What, or who, encouraged you to take up a career as an artist?

LM: I was mostly encouraged by my mother. She always encouraged me to pursue what I wanted in life and never doubted me for a minute. She is so incredibly supportive of me and my art.

2da: You have said that your work explores the interconnectivity of life, can you tell us more about these ideas?

LM: I have always been obsessed with my mortality and how I fit into the world; I have a strong fear of death, which is a bit silly. I try to explore the place of living things in the world through my work, as a way of dealing with this fear, I think. Many of the inspirations for my pieces come from the “circle of life”, the star dust theory, life, and death. I see life as a transference of energy and emotion, which I illustrate by having my flora and fauna interact in a very immortal way such as the “recycling” of my creatures into new creatures. They are almost like their own ecosystems existing in their own universe.

2da: Your work often simultaneously captures both life and death; beauty and savagery. How do you find balance in your works between such disparate themes?

LM: I think that those themes will always have that balance no matter what. You cannot recognize one without the other in any piece of art that uses those themes. I feel like I must acknowledge both every time I create a piece, and focusing on the violence of nature addresses everything at once. I am not sure if any works are truly balanced, since that is not my goal, but I am glad that they have that feeling to them.

2da: Where do you turn to for inspiration? Are there any artists you like to reference?

LM: For me inspiration is everywhere. I am inspired by forests, parks, all sorts of museums, scientific illustrations, non-objective painting, zoos, and so on. I love to reference John James Audubon the most. ►

● *Kingfisher*, 2015, ballpoint pen, ink pencil, liquid ink, colored pencil, marker, graphite, and gel pen, 18 × 14 inches



● *Martes americana*, 2015, ballpoint pen, ink pencils, acrylic ink, marker, colored pencil, graphite, and gel pen on hot-pressed watercolor paper, 18 1/4 x 24 inches



2da: What advice can you give to our readers who want to develop their drawing techniques in a similar manner?

LM: I know it is obvious, but honestly, practice is the key to developing your techniques. The materials I use are not the standard ones taught in school, so you must learn how to use them usually on your own. I had no formal training with pens or inks, so I do not really have any technique advice. Reading guide books really helped me a lot when I was a kid. Playing around with the materials and experimenting with them is crucial. Have fun with them. In time, your skills and techniques will grow.

2da: What are your preferred tools to work with and why?

LM: As of right now, my preferred tools are Pentel Hybrid Technica pens and Derwent Inktense pencils. The pens have been my go-to pens for over four years, I love the fine line quality, they are also archival. The Inktense are easy to use because they are in pencil form. I do not really know how to use watercolors or bottled inks just yet, but I am

learning how to use them. I am planning on switching to watercolors soon to get greater color hues, blendability, and larger washes.

2da: Do you have a particular place you like to go to draw? Do you create your works in a studio, at home or out in nature?

LM: My favorite place to create is in my apartment. I have a large amount of work space available and I have a large drafting table that doubles as my dining room table inside. I hope to someday have a studio space, but for now my apartment works beautifully.

2da: What has been your favorite project to work on so far?

LM: My favorite project so far has been my current solo show *Flesh Blood Bone* that I am finishing up. I specifically loved working on detailing the largest piece for the show, *When the First Became Divine*. I love detailing, it's very meditative, and I can get lost in it for hours.

2da: How do you deal with a challenging project? Do you have any tips for our readers? ►

⚡ LAUREN'S SIGNIFICANT ARTWORK

This small piece was created in my second year of university, in 2012, and is the very first drawing that I created in the style I currently work in. It was my first animal-based piece that I felt comfortable making in college. I was nervous about using such "low brow" materials and subject matters. It changed my life. I finally created something that felt true to me as an artist. I still own this piece and plan on keeping it forever as a reminder of just how far I have come in four years.







LM: I tend to get overwhelmed very easily, so I always make to-do lists specifically for my pieces. Each day I try to get my list of things done. I find thinking about it in small chunks, instead of the whole piece, helps to make it less of a challenge. I would definitely suggest listing out progress day by day.

2da: Are there any other skills and techniques you would like to learn in the future? Are there any materials you would like to experiment with?

LM: Absolutely! I really want to start using watercolor and gouache in the near future. I have yet to start experimenting with them, but I am hunting down some recommended brands. It can be very intimidating for me to switch materials, so I have been easing myself into it.

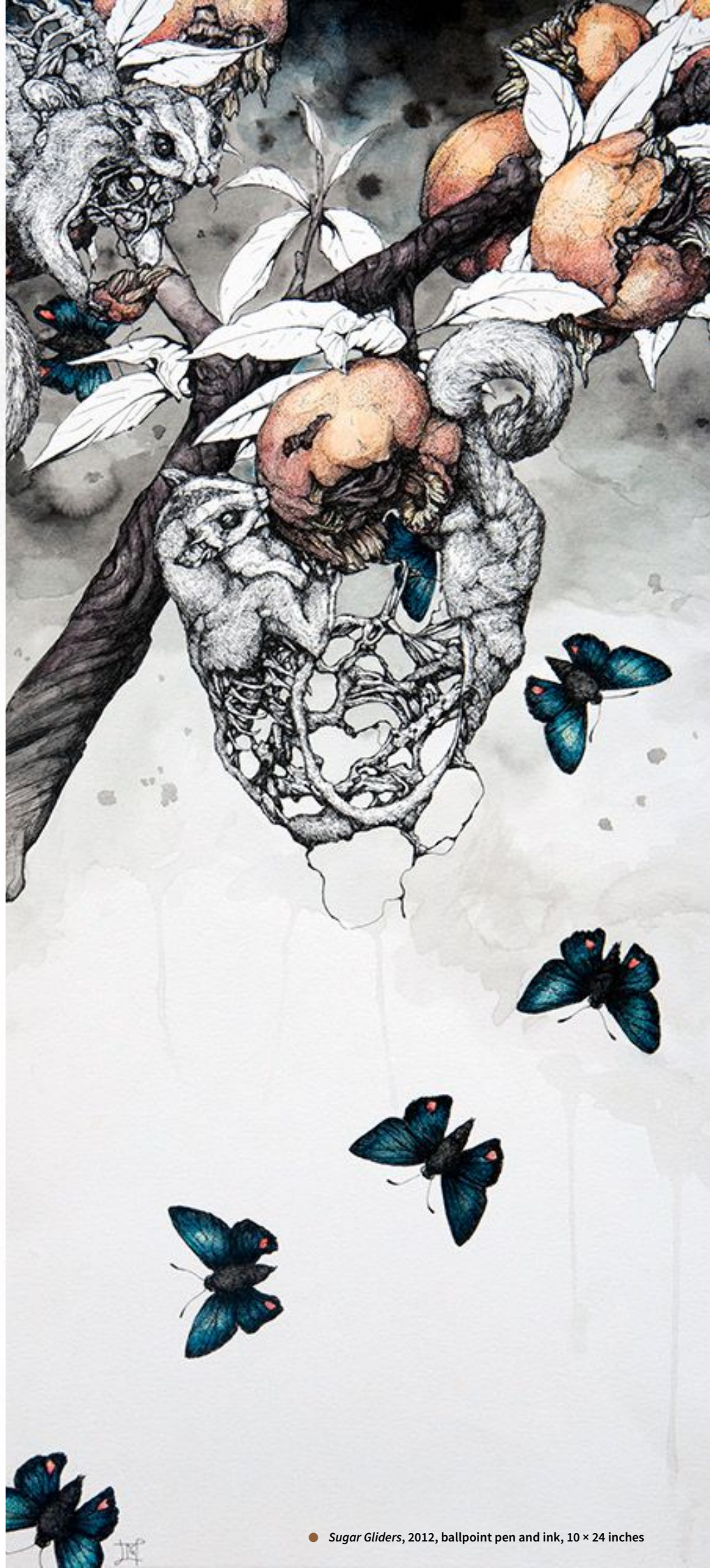
2da: What has your experience as a freelance artist been like? What lessons have you learned?

“Being a freelance artist is very demanding and stressful at times, especially dealing with the crazy number of deadlines”

LM: It has been hard financially, but I love working on art all day and having the satisfaction of working with my hands to create something entirely new. Being a freelance artist is very demanding and stressful at times, especially dealing with the crazy number of deadlines. Learning to make sure I set aside time each day to work on art, like a job, was tough. I also realized that I really had no idea what I was doing with photographing or framing my work, or with how incredibly expensive it can be. I am always learning something new.

2da: What does a working day in the life of Lauren look like?

LM: I normally wake up around 7am and deal with chores before beginning work at 9am. Around that time, I usually put on a podcast, radio station, or TV. Then I set up my drawing table, my computer and set out the materials I will be using that day. I will sit and work until around 2pm, have lunch, and then continue working, either until dinner or until around 9pm. Most of my days are spent just drawing with a schedule like this. ►





● *To Kill the Goose that Laid the Golden Eggs*, ballpoint pen, ink pencil, liquid ink, colored pencil, graphite, and gel pen on hot-pressed watercolor paper, 18 ¼ × 24 inches, (21 ½ × 27 ½ inches framed)

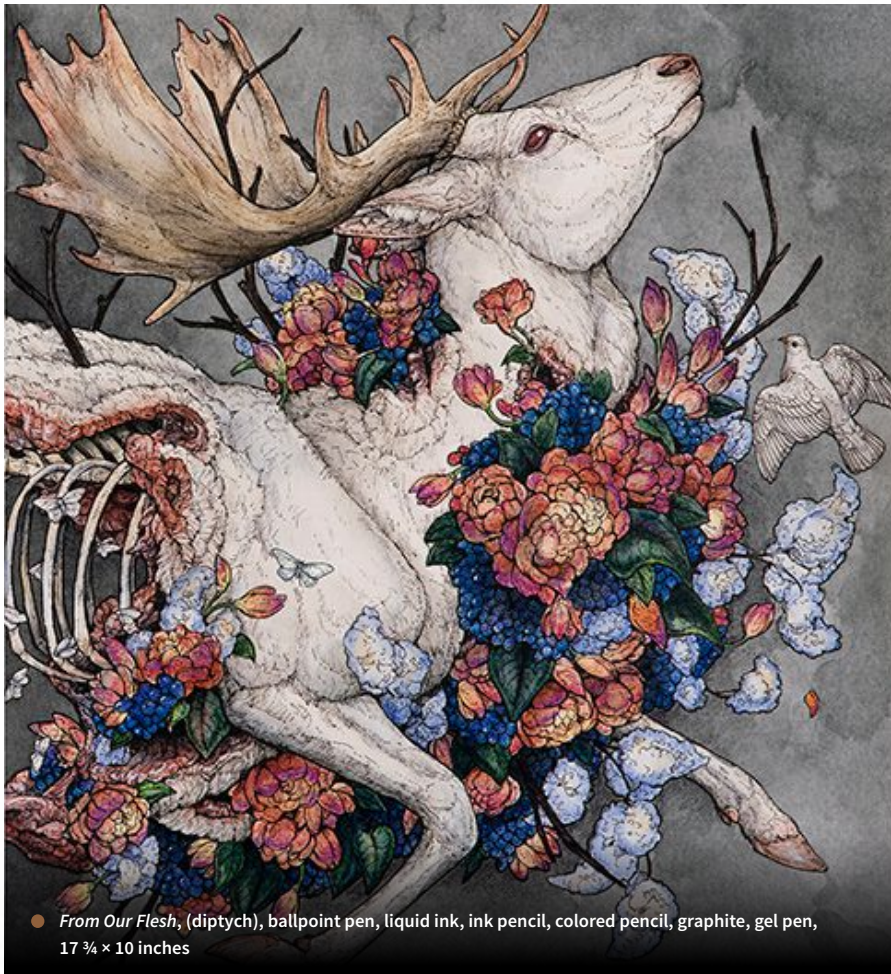




● *Peruke*, 2016, ballpoint pen, ink pencils, acrylic ink, colored pencil, graphite, and gel pen on hot-pressed watercolor paper, 15 × 17 ¼ inches



● *The Red Berries*, 2012, ballpoint pen and ink, 18 × 24 inches



● *From Our Flesh*, (diptych), ballpoint pen, liquid ink, ink pencil, colored pencil, graphite, gel pen, 17 ¾ × 10 inches

2da: How do you like to spend your time when you aren't creating beautiful art?

LM: When I am not working on art or running errands, I like to hangout at local coffee shops and parks. Since I am inside during the days that I work on art, I prefer to spend my off days outside. Once it gets to be too chilly, I just lounge around all day. I'm a bit of a hermit.

2da: And finally, what can we look forward to from you next?

LM: Larger, more complex works. I wanted to get bigger in scale and begin experimenting with landscapes. I'm very excited to see where larger scale will take my work. I will also have a solo show at Corey Helford Gallery in November called *Flesh Blood Bone*. I cannot wait to show the world the work I have created for that show. ●

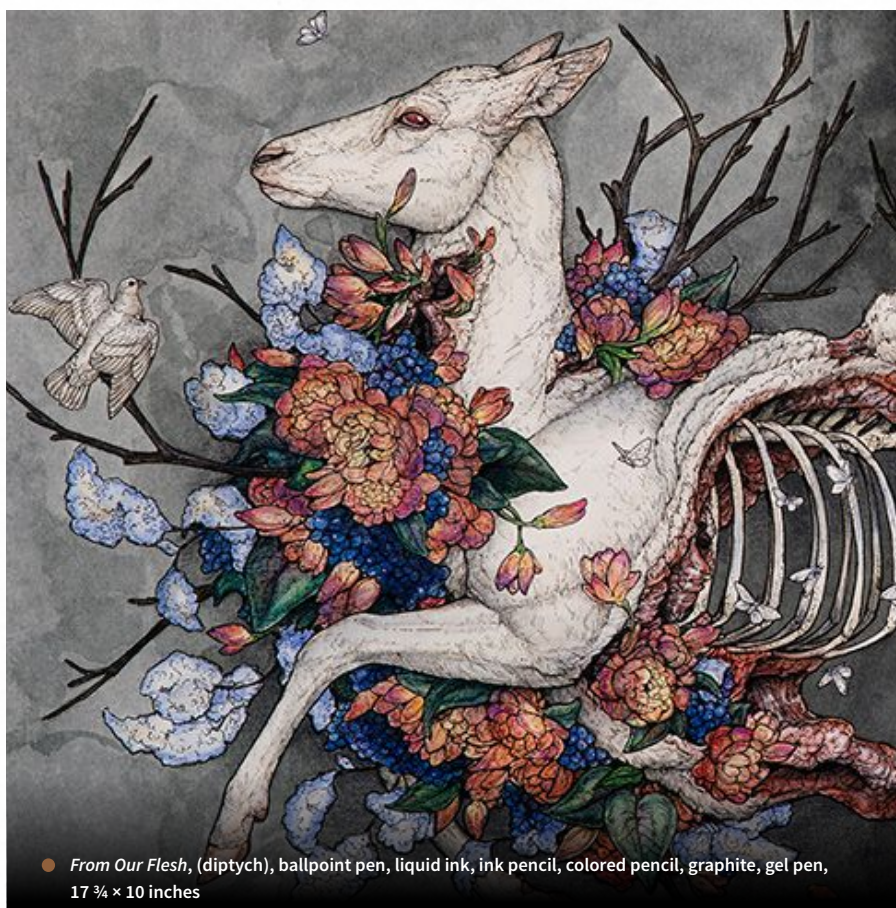
Thank you Lauren for taking the time to speak to 2dartist!



● *Churning up the Stars*, 2013, ballpoint pen on multi-media paper, 11 ¼ × 23 ¾ inches



● *Churning up the Stars*, 2013, ballpoint pen on multi-media paper, 11 ¼ × 23 ¾ inches



● *From Our Flesh*, (diptych), ballpoint pen, liquid ink, ink pencil, colored pencil, graphite, gel pen, 17 ¾ × 10 inches



● *Collared Doves*, 2015, ballpoint pen, ink pencils, liquid ink, colored pencils, graphite and gel pen on multi-media paper, 15 3/4 x 22 3/4 inches (approx)



● Fortuna, 2016, ballpoint pen, ink pencils, ink wash, colored pencils, graphite, and gel pen on multi-media paper, 15 × 29 inches (approx), (19 ½ × 22 ½ inches framed)

The Artist



Yewon Park
yewon-park.info

Yewon Park specializes in concept and visual development, and has diverse experience in the game and animation industries. She currently works at Blizzard Entertainment as a concept artist.



Sketchbook of Yewon Park: Expressive character sketch

Visual development artist Yewon Park unveils her concept design sketches for her personal projects... ▶

All images © Yewon Park



es

See how different silhouettes and ideations create a detailed design...

Comic books and animation have always fascinated me. As a child I always liked to draw and read Manga. Then later on, I wanted to learn how to draw and sketch cool stuff based on my imagination. I pull a lot of inspiration from my past because that is what I love to work on.

The great thing about being a concept artist is that there are so many things out there that will always keep me wanting to draw. I am so passionate about creating and designing a lot of things based on my own taste, and

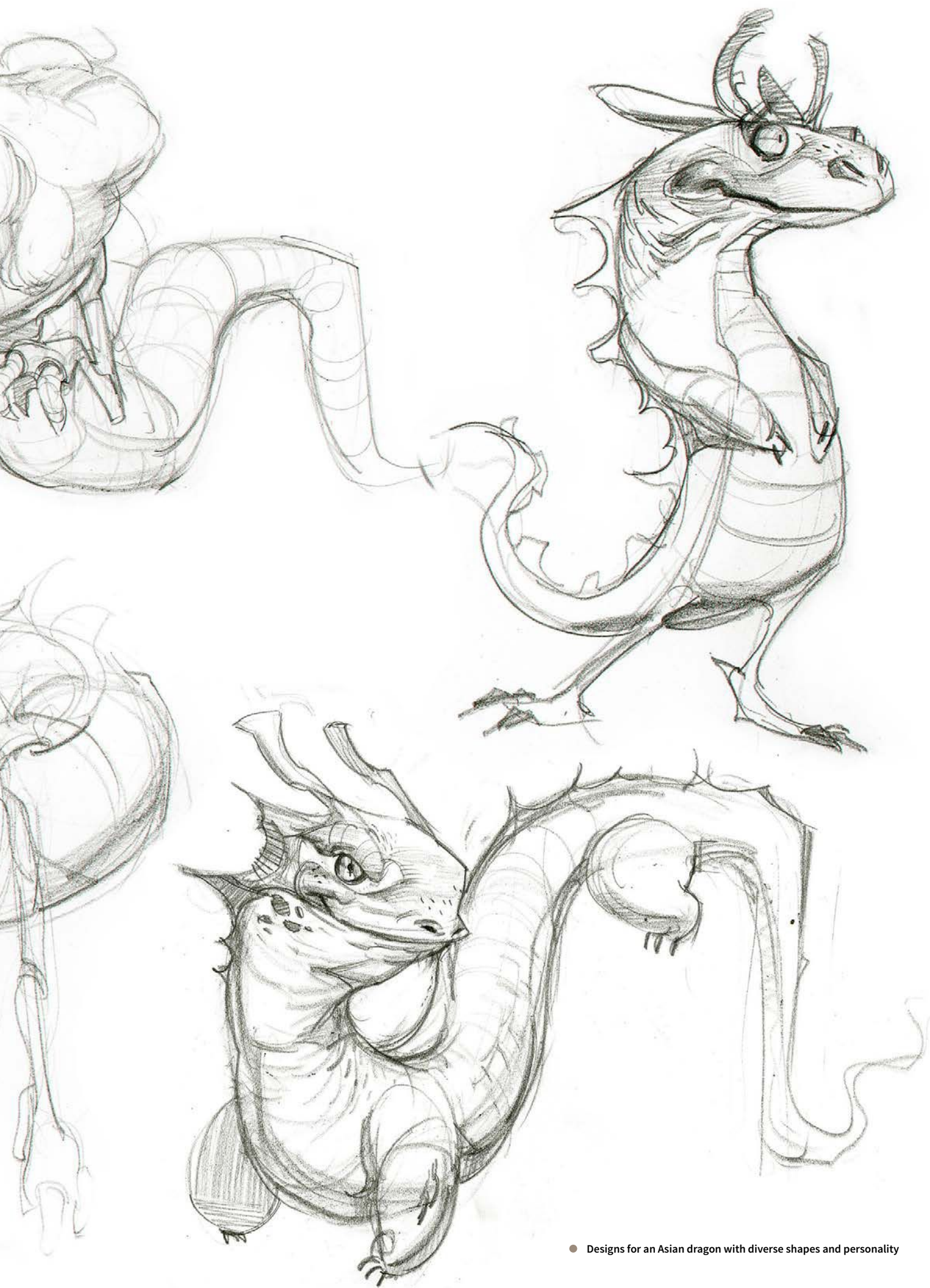
I would love to broaden my perspective to design more creative work sooner rather than later. There are many great artists I take inspiration from, and I want people to feel good when they look at my work.

“Creating my own project helps me to come up with some great ideas”

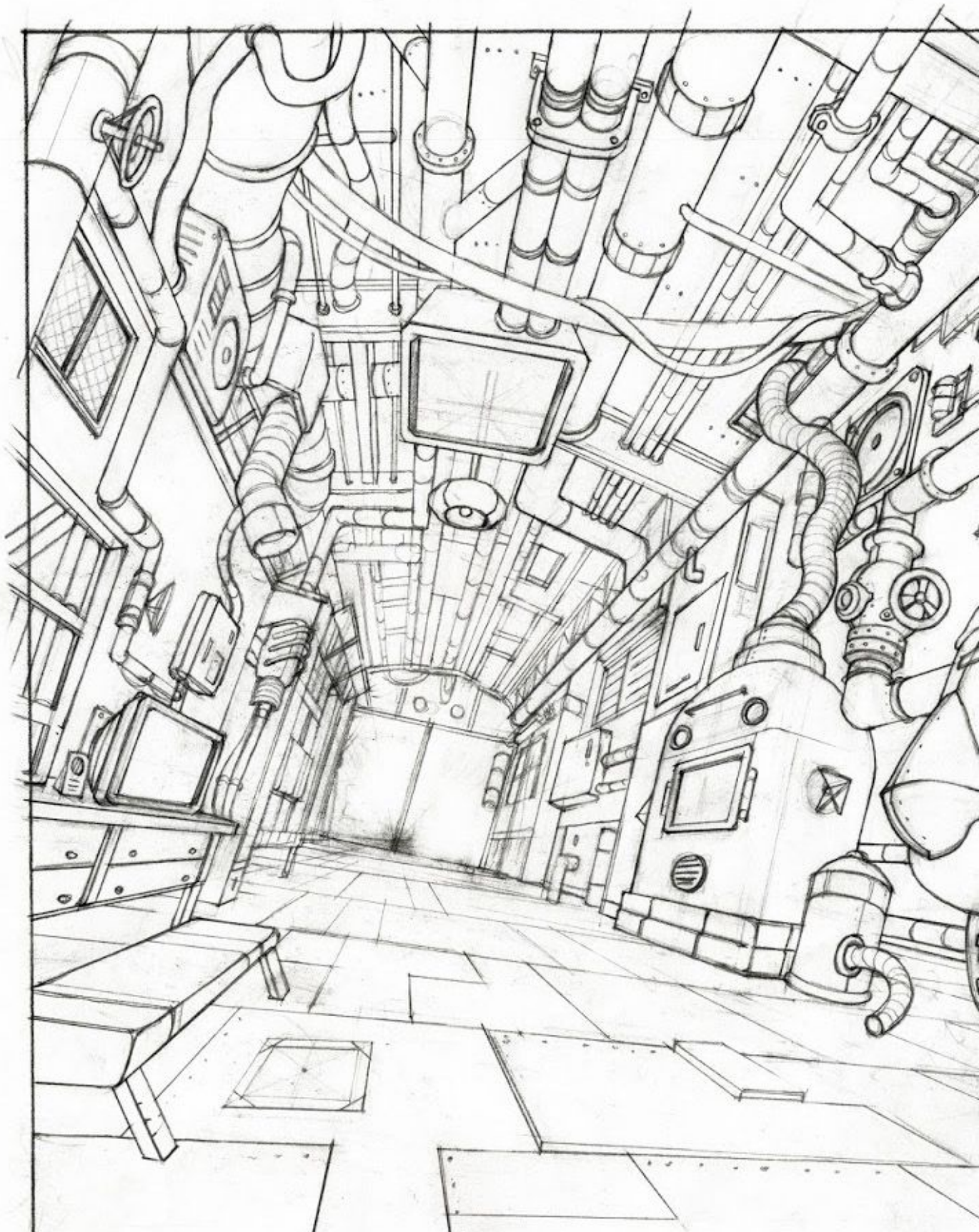
Inspiration and ideas:

I grew up reading Manga comic books and watching Disney and Pixar movies, so all of these have influenced me a lot. In terms of artists who inspire me, I have always admired the work of: Shiyo Kim, Mingjue Helen Chen, Daisuke “Dice” Tsutsumi, Robert Kondo, Ryan Lang, Mathias Verhasselt, Woonyoung Jung and Jeff Turley. ►





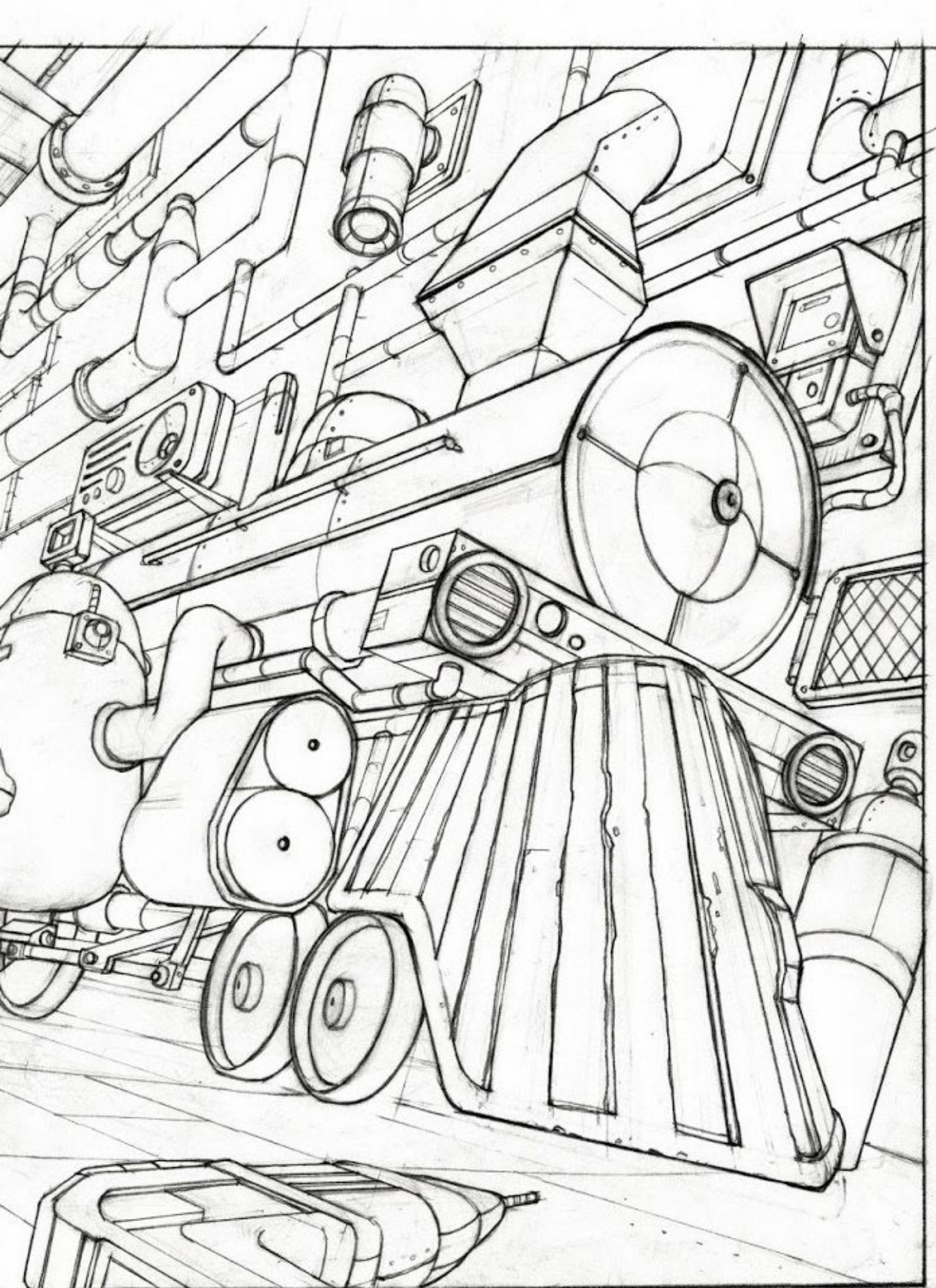
● Designs for an Asian dragon with diverse shapes and personality



PRO TIP

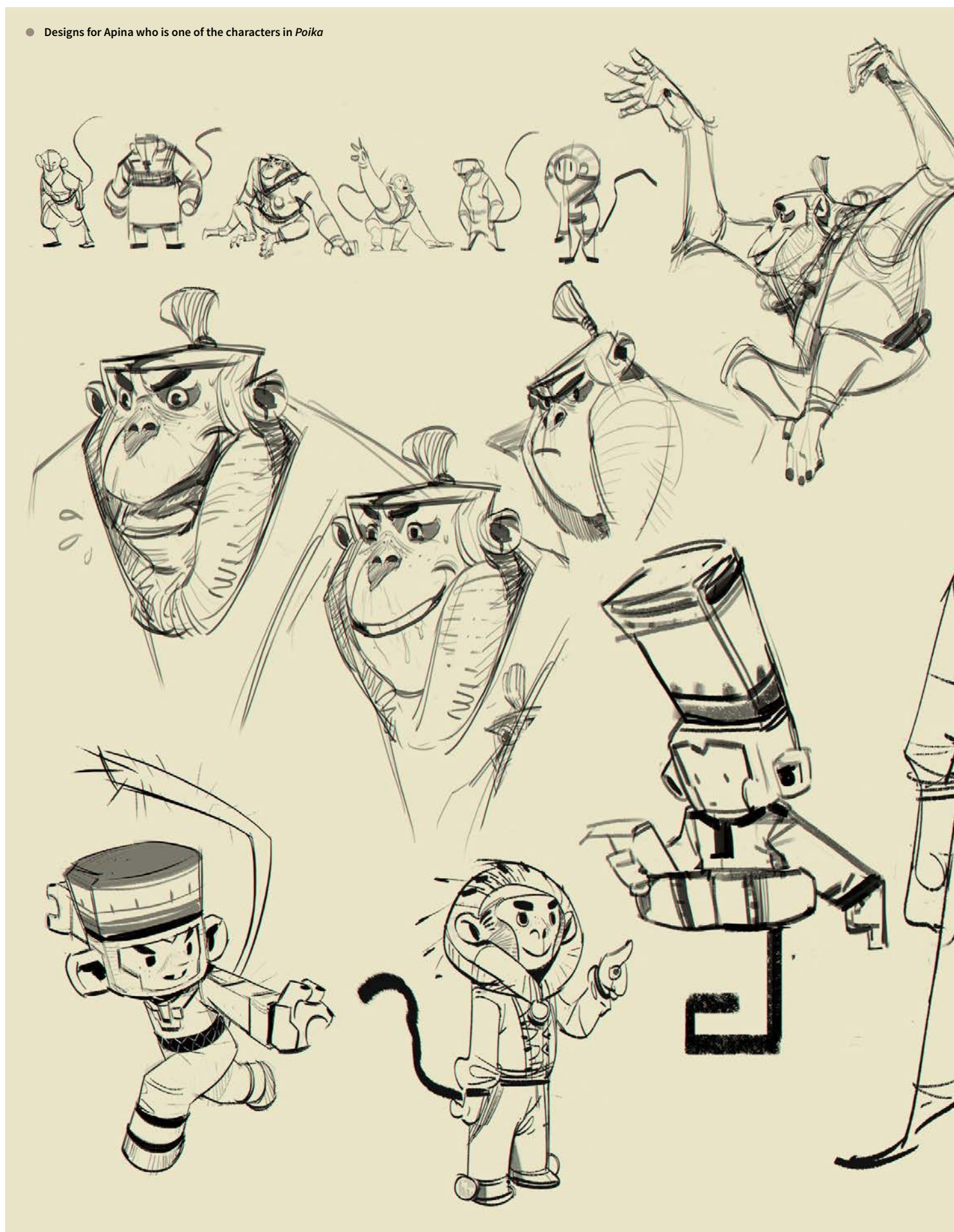
Foundation skills

There are many people who want to create very finished, cool works without building up their foundation skills first. Even if learning basic drawing skills is less interesting to you, to achieve a successful artwork you still need to complete your understanding of drawing foundation skills before you reach the next step.



● A lavatory design in pencil

- Designs for Apina who is one of the characters in *Poika*



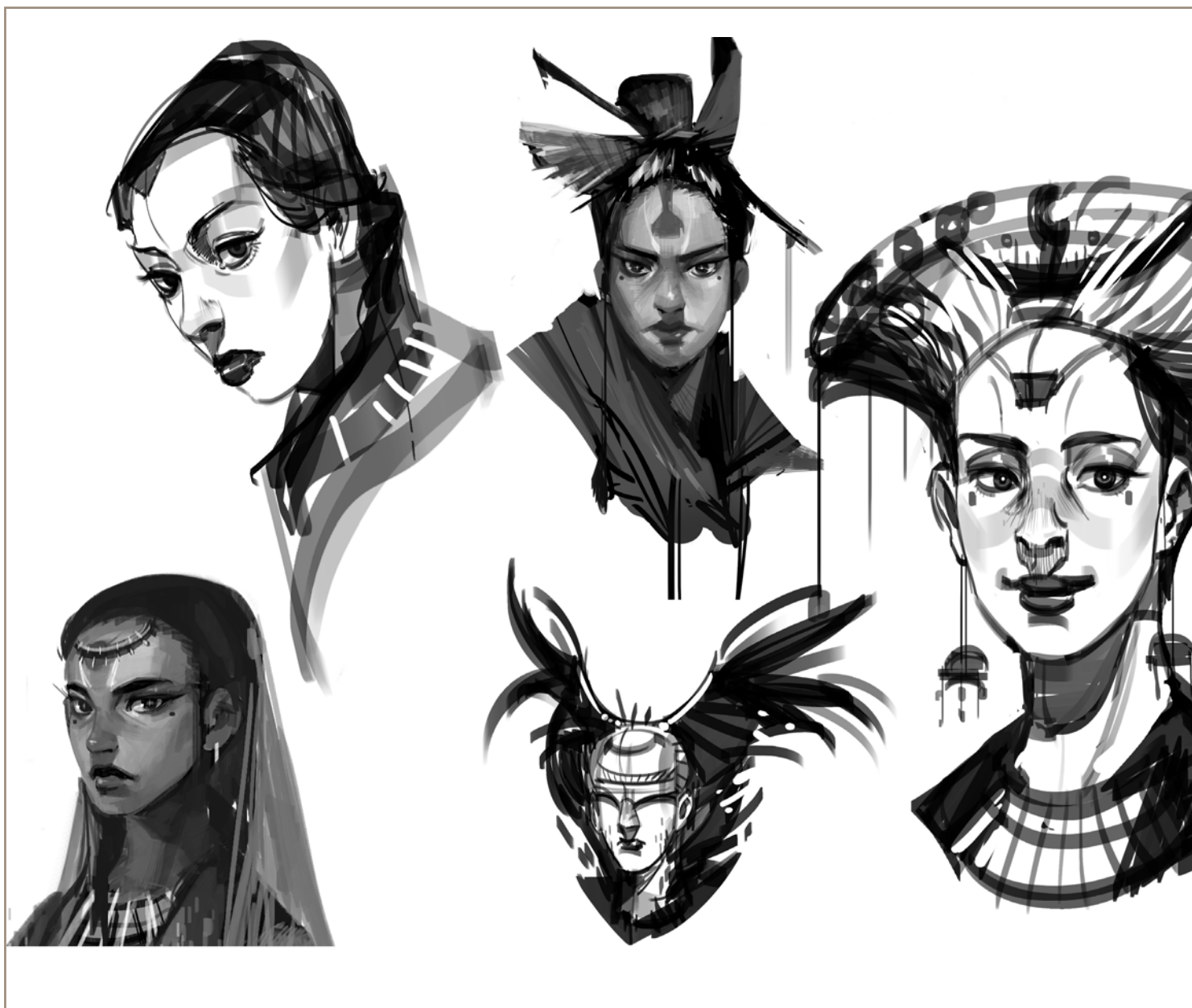


⚡ YEWON'S SIGNIFICANT ARTWORK

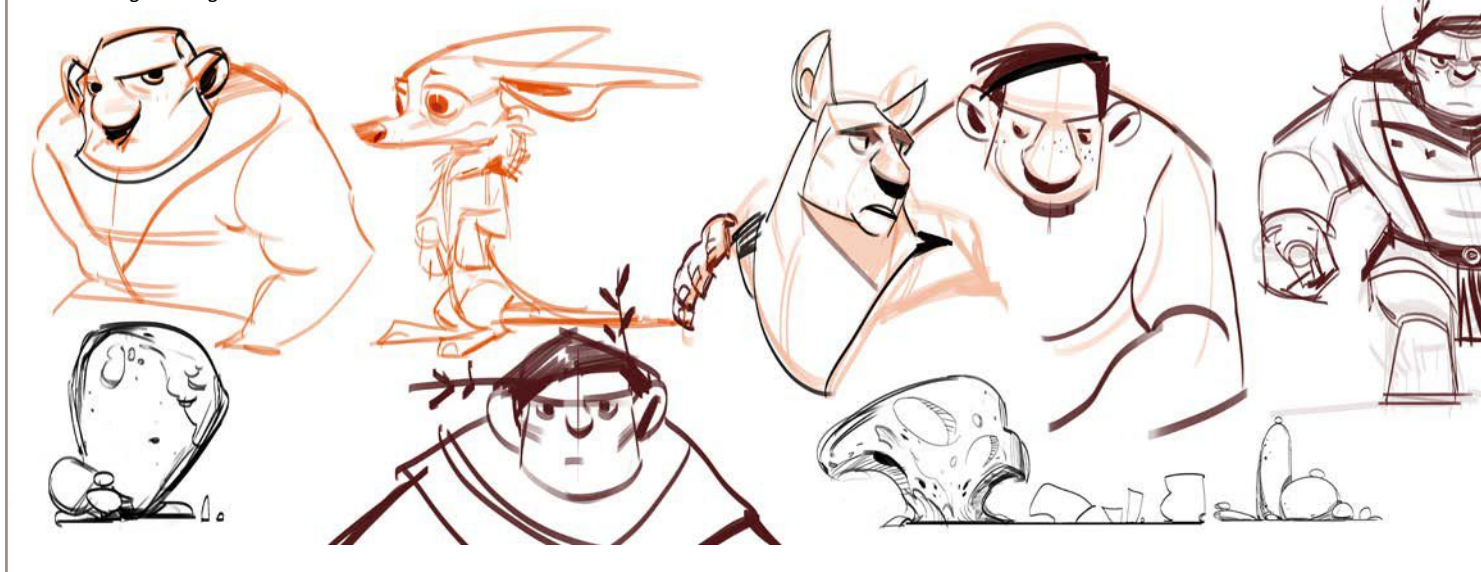
doodle for bird

This sketch is part of one of my personal works. Before I drew this, I would only focus on foundation skills but when working on this project I started to consider storytelling and ways to add personality to my sketches. In this sketch I tried to push the character's expression and storytelling. I used the content and posing in harmony to fully achieve the emotion I wanted the audience to feel.

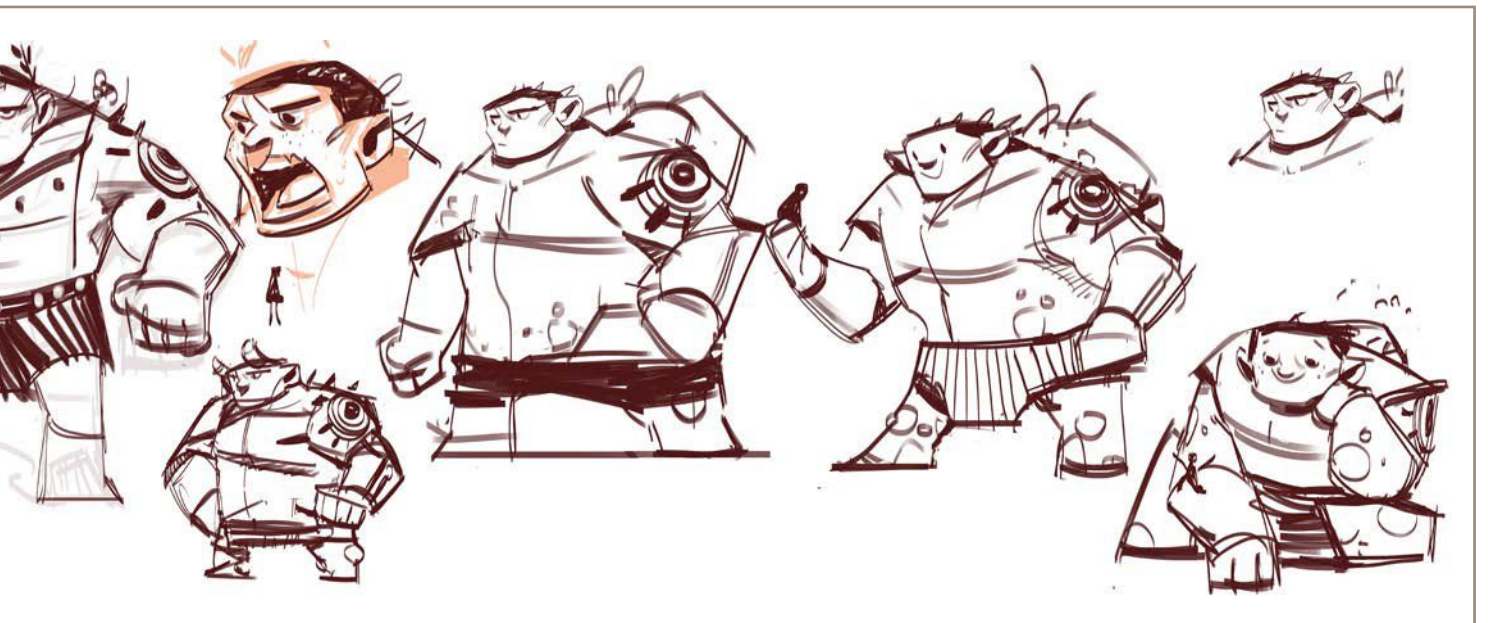




● Various giant designs created for fun



● Sketches of Athena in the *Odyssey* project



My life at the moment follows the typical busy routine of an artist working for a studio. But recently, I have spent some time working on some personal projects for a gallery show at Nucleus gallery. I am having so much fun with it and it gives me an opportunity to refresh my brain. Usually, creating my own project helps me to come up with some great ideas in any aspect.

Sometimes, you may find yourself facing a creative slump. I recommend looking back at your work and trying to figure out what it was that made you excited about art in the first place. Experiencing new things, like traveling, will also have a great influence on your artwork. It is important, however, to recognize that creating art can be a difficult practice even for the most accomplished artist out there.

Materials:

I used to use traditional materials such as pen and coloring pencils a lot. Currently, I mostly utilize Photoshop for sketches because this enables me to speed up my work process. Using Photoshop also makes it easier for me to adjust a sketch if I need to.

Sketching techniques:

My main sketching technique is to break down objects or parts of objects into their most simplistic forms. When I design characters, I always consider the proportion of characters creating a flow between small, big and medium forms. ●

Would you like to see your sketches featured in 2dartist magazine?

We're always on the lookout for talented artists and their artwork to adorn the pages of our magazine. If you think you have what it takes, get in touch!

To submit, simply email Annie at annie@3dtotal.com with a selection of your images or a link to your portfolio online, plus a little information about you.

We look forward to hearing from you!



● Various poses and final design for Skeri in the *Poika* project



Art Gallery

Each issue the 2dartist team selects 10 of the best digital images from around the world. Enjoy!



Repairs

Rasmus Poulsen

Year created: 2016

Web: technouveau.net

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Submit your images! Simply email annie@3dtotal.com





London

Slawek Fedorczuk

Year created: 2016

Web: artstation.com/artist/slawekfedorczuk

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Snow shrine

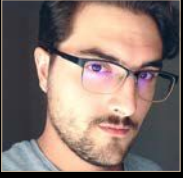
Masahiro Sawada

Year created: 2016

Web: artstation.com/artist/masahiro_sawada

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Double Nature

Mario Manzanares

Year created: 2016

Web: artstation.com/artist/mariomanzanares

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Dwarf Mage

Filipe Pagliuso

Year created: 2016

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Shiva's Fleet

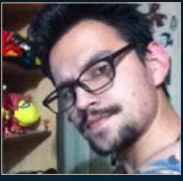
Sergey Musin

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CTHULHU

Juan Pablo Corredor Martinez

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ROLDAN

Robot Sketch

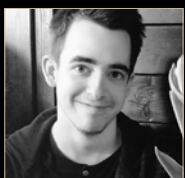
Juan Pablo Roldan

Year created: 2016

Web: artstation.com/artist/roldan

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Abandoned Theme Park

Lukas Esch

Year created: 2016

Web: lukasesch.com

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Lukas Esch



Stranger from the North

Matthew Sellers

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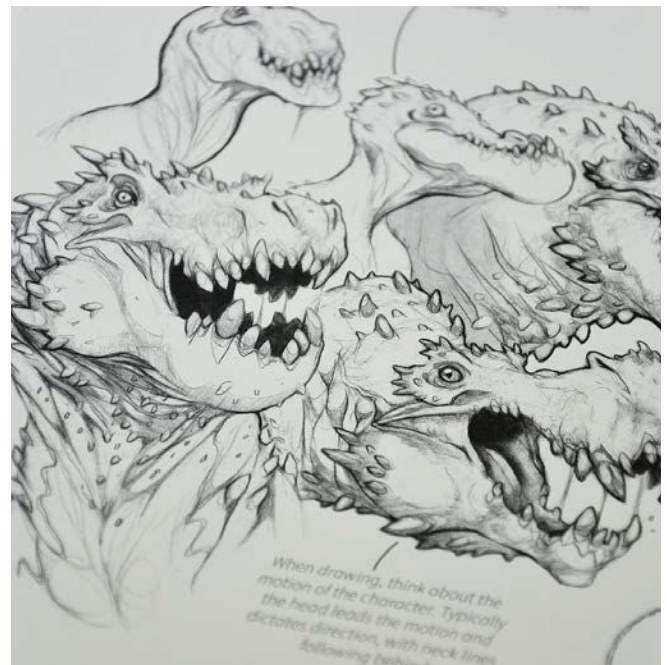
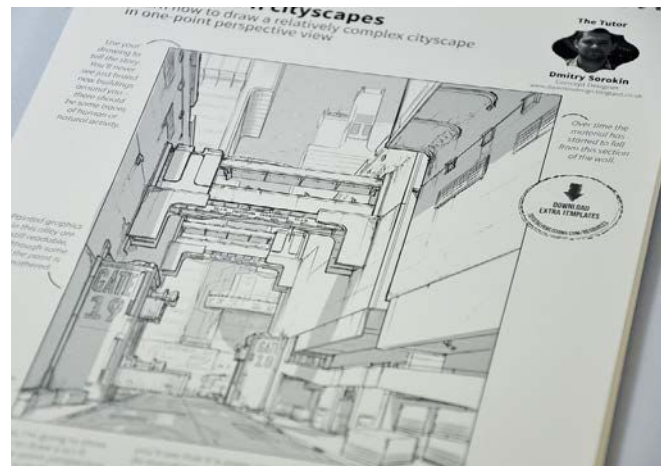
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The Artist



Galan Pang
galan.artstation.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Galan Pang is currently the concept art director of a Shanghai based videogame studio. He has previously worked on various AAA console, mobile, and VR projects.



Speed paint a street cleaning mech

Concept art director Galan Pang teaches you how to construct a futuristic street cleaning mech and his human operator [▶](#)



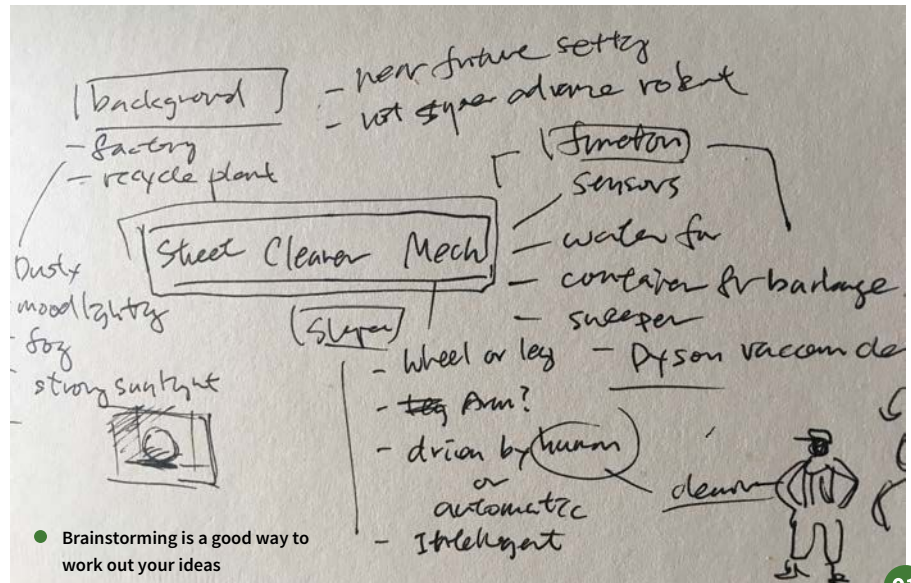
Learn how to create an atmospheric sci-fi scene...

During the videogame production process, the team will produce lots of concept paintings that will include many in-game elements such as design, lighting, and narrative elements. These concepts help the team to understand and visualize the game. When creating a concept it is important to get a good balance of detail and effort. Putting in too much information will take more time to finish but too little information may not be enough for artists to continue their work.

In this tutorial I will show you a work efficient step-by-step workflow for creating a concept painting. We will create a speed painting of a street cleaning mech. I will share some of the tips and tricks I use in my everyday workflow.

01 Brainstorming and research: As this is a speed painting you do not need to have an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter but you need to know what you are going to paint. In a real work scenario the editor or art director will provide you with some background information for the project; such as the narrative, setting, and character design.

For this painting we will not only design a mech but also add enough story telling elements to give the audience room to fill in the narrative. We will



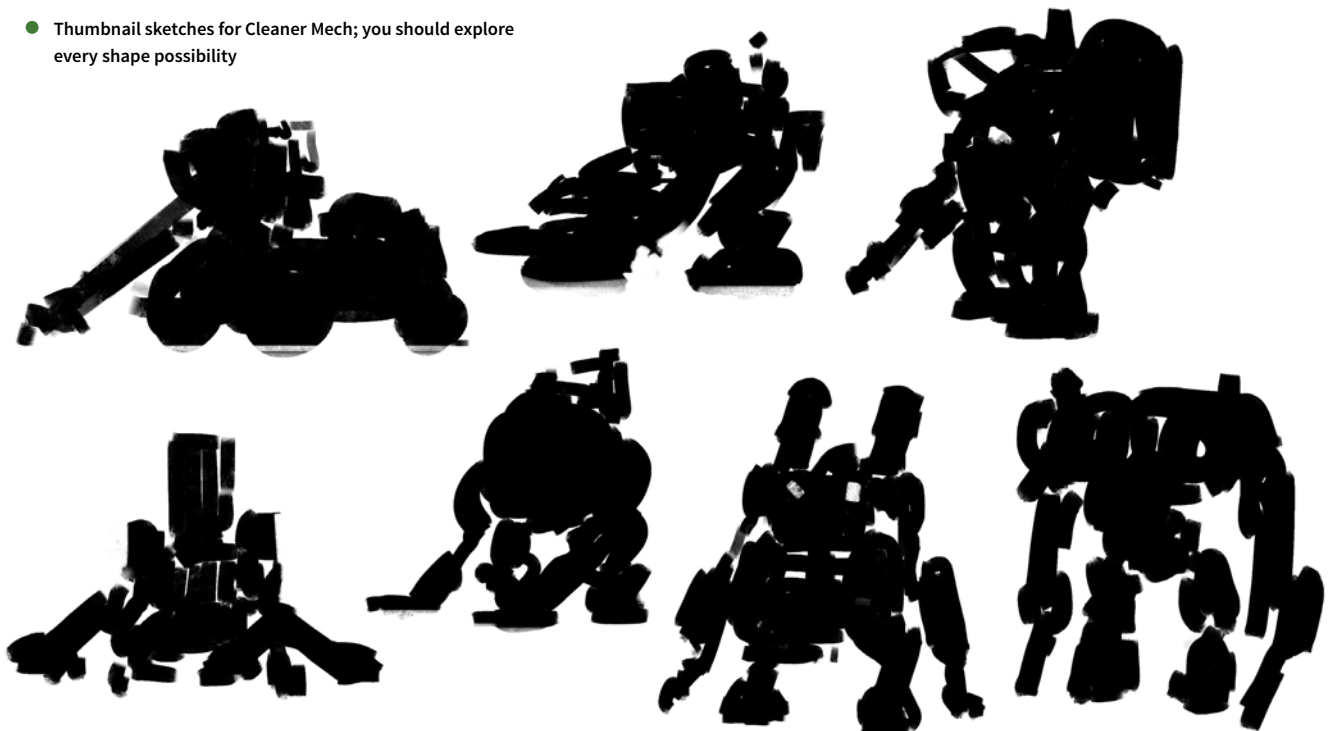
paint a cleaner mech and his human operator, who are having a rest during their lunch break in the garbage treatment plant. The concept will be set at noon, so the scene will need to be lit by strong sunlight, with some light bouncing off the ground. The operator will not only act as part of the narrative but also give the viewer a sense of scale and a touch of life to the otherwise cold painting. I recommend you spend a few minutes brainstorming your ideas – you can write down keywords or sketch a couple of thumbnails.

I find it useful to do a quick research session on Google to get some references. For this painting you can search for images of garbage

treatment plants, mechs, garbage trucks, and street cleaners. You might find it useful to keep all of the images open in separate tabs on your browser or save the images and make a collage in Photoshop. You do not need to have detailed images; you just want to get a feel for the subject and mood you want to convey. You might find it useful to find some concept art by other artists for reference.

02 Design: The main focus of this painting is the mech; your priority when designing the mech should be its functionality. It should look as realistic as possible as well as looking cool and unique. Spend a bit of time ►

- Thumbnail sketches for Cleaner Mech; you should explore every shape possibility



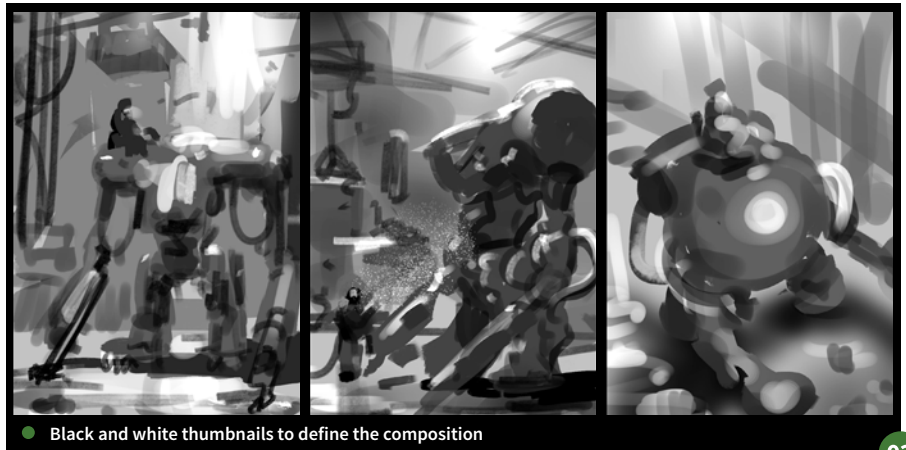
sketching out some thumbnails of different mech silhouettes but remember to try keeping in mind its functionality, what parts would the mech need to perform its job. You could add a vacuum tube, a collection box for garbage or an arm for picking up garbage etc. There will be some elements that your mech will need to have such as a seat for the operator, an engine, and legs or wheels.

03 Thumbnails: With the research and initial concept worked out it is time to do some thumbnails, to help define the depth of the painting use three or four different values. Keep the thumbnails small as you only need to get a rough overview of the scene and work out the composition. The highest contrast area should be the focus of the composition. You might also want to also consider different lighting situation, that will affect tone transition. You can put a spot light to create a small area with the highest contrast (brightest highlight and darkest shadow). However, keep in mind this is only a rough idea of the painting, so you might end up using a different treatment when you start the actual painting. Moreover, try to stick to general composition rules when creating thumbnails, such as the rule of thirds.

“Remember to occasionally flip your work to give you a fresh perspective and spot any errors”

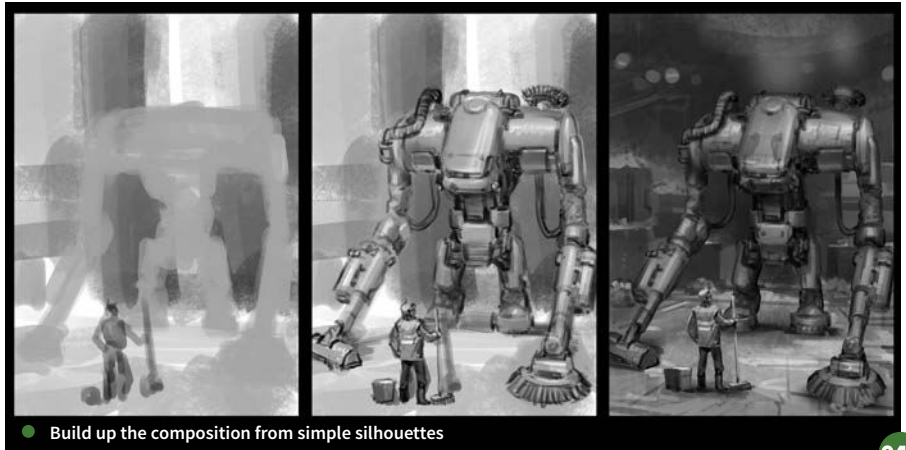
04 Gray scale sketch: Start the main painting by using the reference thumbnail to paint in the large silhouettes and slowly add more details. You will find it easier to make adjustments if you put each element on separate layers. Arrange the layers into: foreground, background, mech, operator, and props. You will be able to see the gray contrast and depth easier if you paint in gray scale – this will also stop you being distracted and thinking too much about color. You want to concentrate on making the design and composition work. Remember to occasionally flip your work to give you a fresh perspective and spot any errors.

05 Adding color: When you are happy with the gray scale sketch you can start adding color using a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer (Ctrl+U), then click Colorize in the properties box and use a Layer Mask to mark where you want to add color. I find it useful to define the color zones according to its material, such as



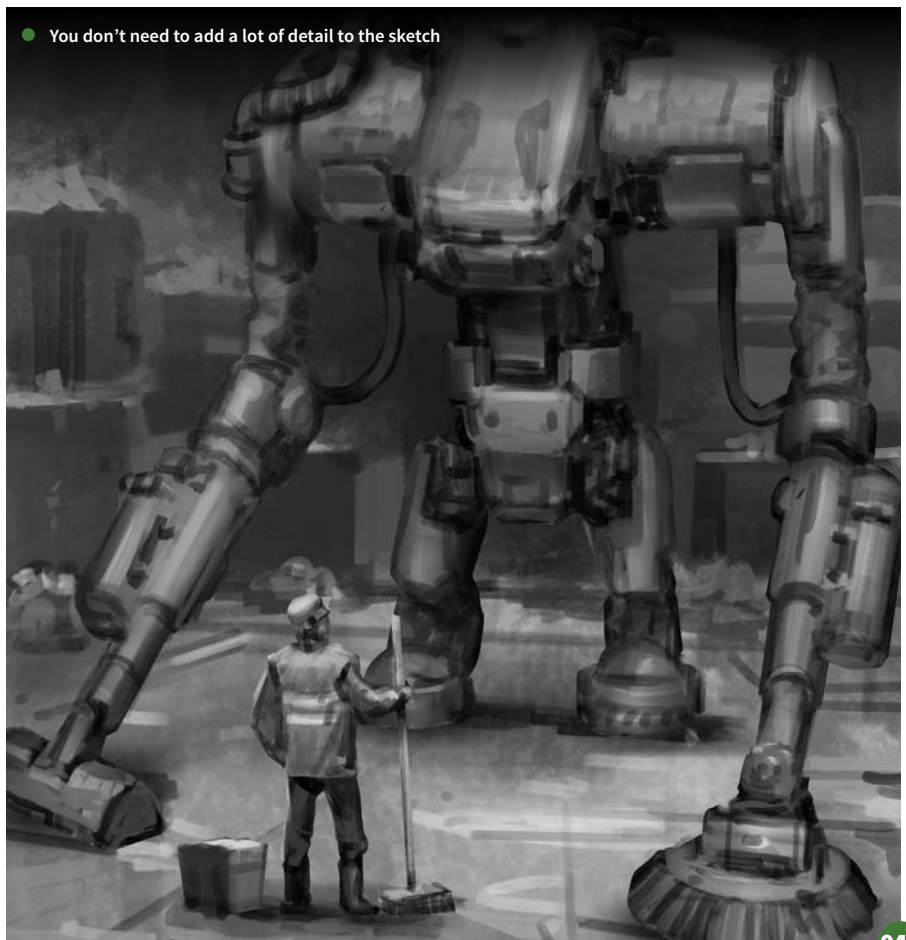
● Black and white thumbnails to define the composition

03



● Build up the composition from simple silhouettes

04a



● You don't need to add a lot of detail to the sketch

04b

painted metal, bare metal, and concrete. The Layers are grouped by clicking Create Clipping Mask; this will only change the color of the element layer. This method also gives you an easier way to change colors in this step or even after the painting is finished because you can easily select each material by its layer mask.

06 Overlay: Create a new layer and use the clipping mask option (Ctrl+Alt+G) to affect each specific element. The number of overlay layers will depend on the complexity of the element, for example, the mech will need three overlay layers; one to add transition color and dark areas, one to add highlights and bright areas, and finally one layer to add dirt and rust. To add extra color variation or dirt you could use a Multiply layer. As well as adding color on the layers you can use different brushes to erase parts to add detail and texture. ►

“It is useful to consider contrast when adding materials, for example; have a matte surface next to a highly reflective surface”

● Follow a few simple steps to add color to your gray scale sketch



05

● Use a soft brush to brighten and darken areas of the image



06

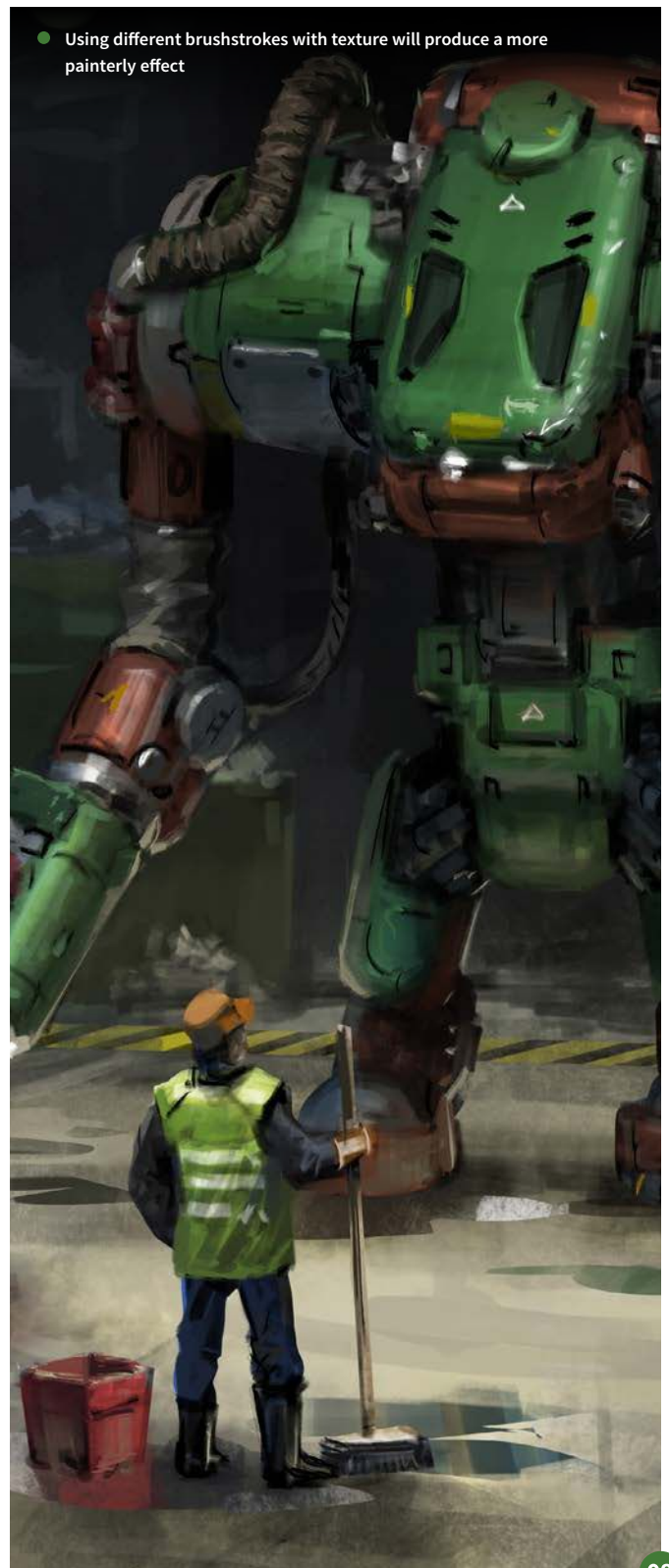


● Use a high value color on an overlay layer to create a reflective surface

07

07 Material definition: When defining the different materials on the mech you should consider their function and physical properties.

The mech's outer shell should be painted for decoration and to prevent rust, the joints will have a strong highlight because they are bare



● Using different brushstrokes with texture will produce a more painterly effect

08

metal and lubricated to reduce friction. Follow these principles to add materials to all the different surfaces. It is useful to consider contrast when adding materials; for example, have a matte surface next to a highly reflective surface.

08 Detailing: Now it is time to add more detail to the image. Use the Color Picker

(I) to select colors for adding details and defining some of the loose edges. Use a small diameter brush to add panel lines and a paint job on the mech. You can also add smaller elements such as signs, hazard lines, and garbage; these help to enrich the painting and add believability. On a separate layer you can add a painterly feel and loosen the brush work with a textured brush.

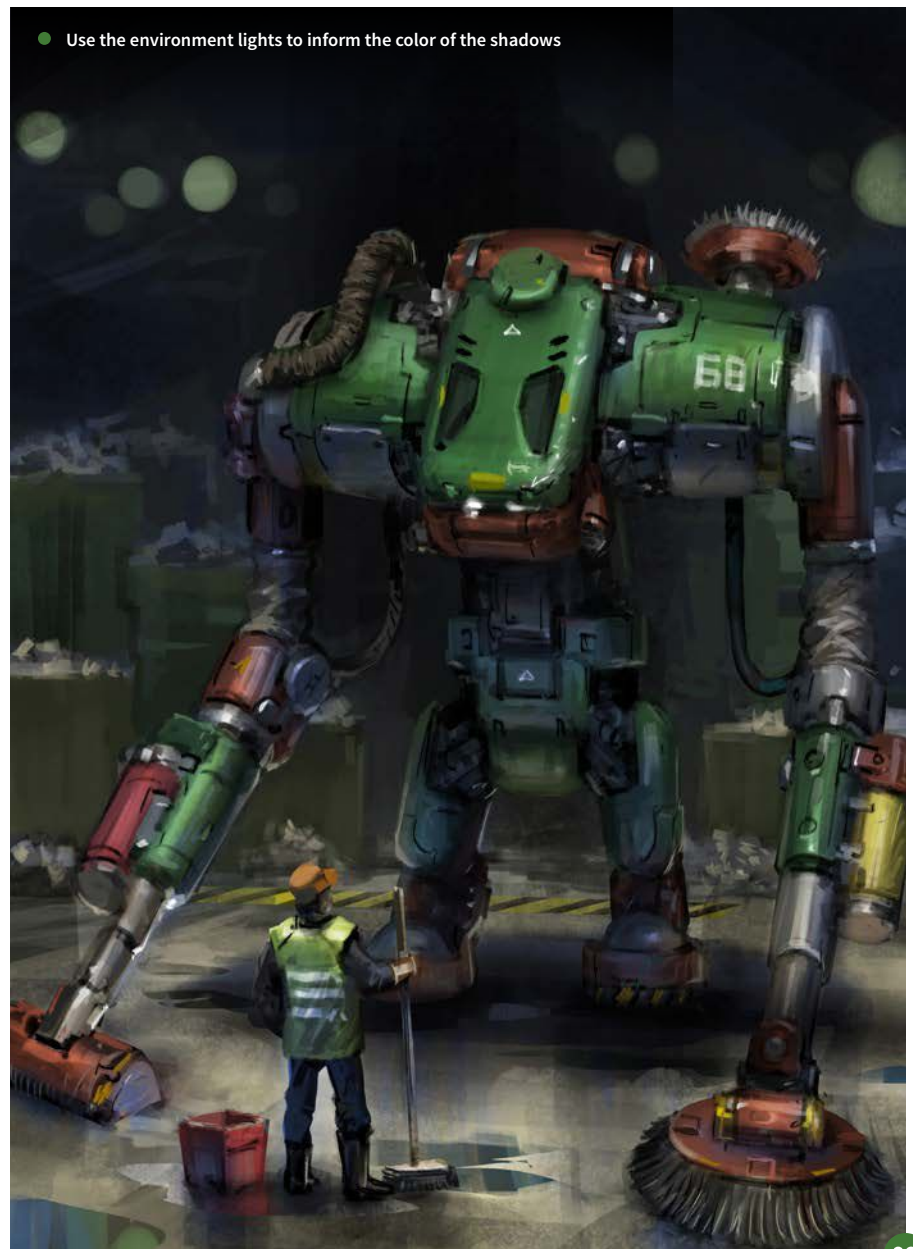
09 Shadows: Use another Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to add color shadows (which should be decided by the environment lights) coming from the objects. You can create a hard shadow by using a hard brush and a soft shadow with an airbrush. To darken the contact shadow use an airbrush with a soft dark color on a Multiply layer. Adjust the opacity of this layer to avoid darkening the shadow area too much; you don't want to lose the detail in those areas.

10 Photo textures: With the main parts almost finished you will want to enhance the realism of the painting. You can do this by applying a few layers of texture cropped from a photograph (you can use your own or find copyright free images online). You ►

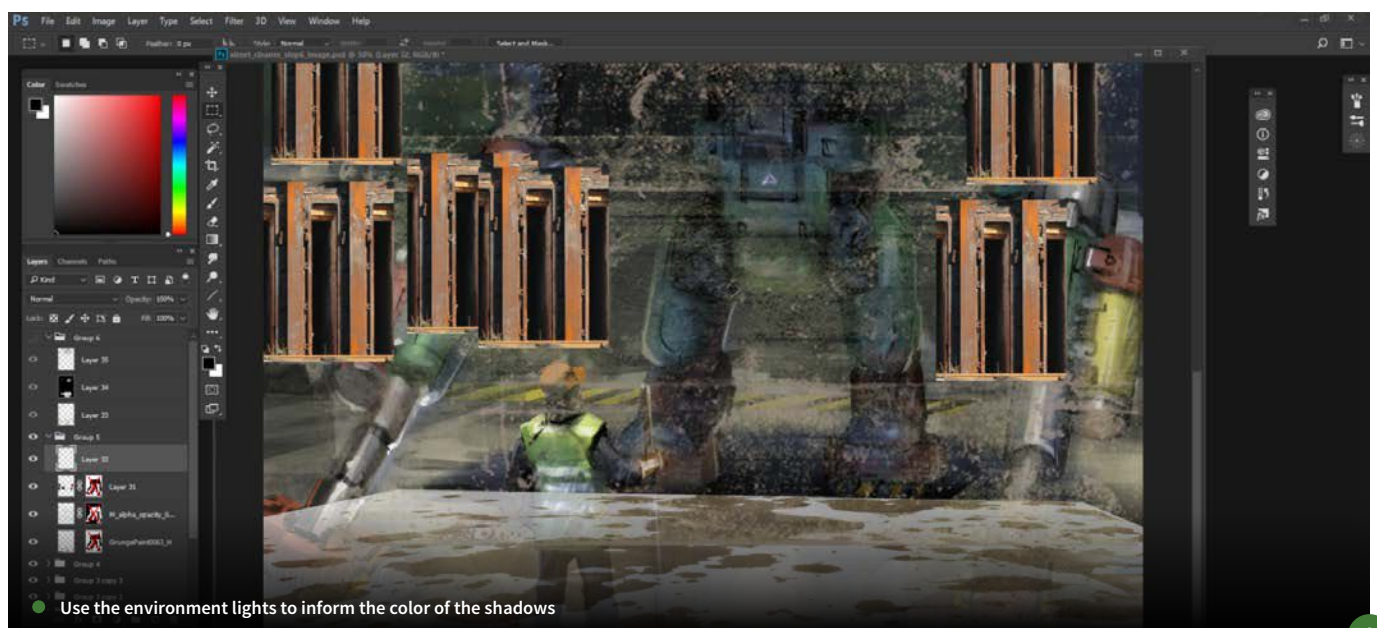


PRO TIPS Speedy shortcut for black and white painting

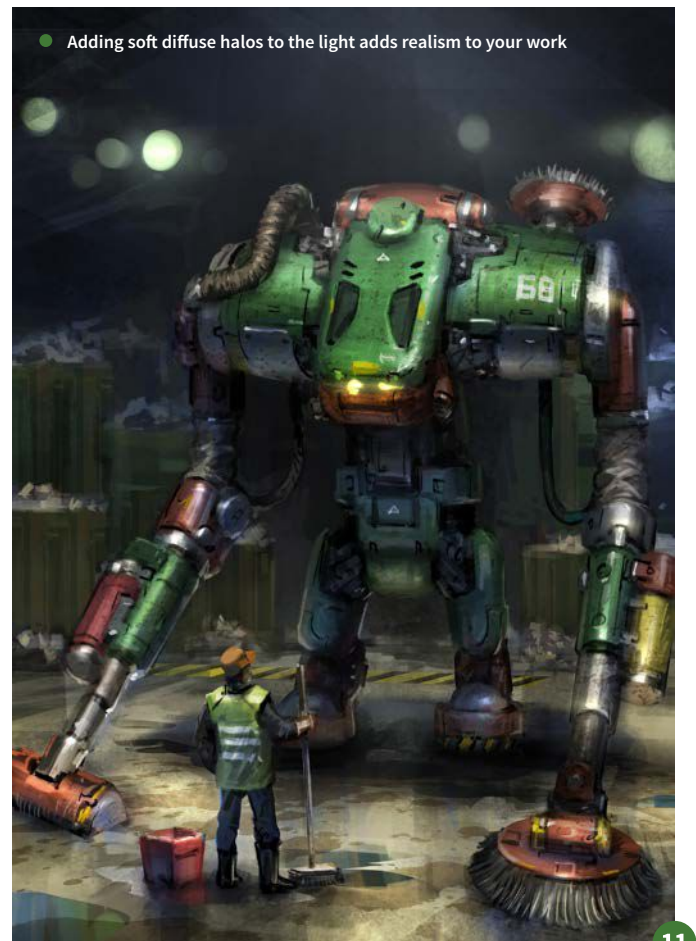
There are a few shortcuts for quickly painting a black and white image. Firstly you can press D to change the current picked color to the default setting (which is Black for the foreground and white for the background). You can use X to swap the foreground and background colors, and finally hold Alt and click on the canvas to pick the color in the canvas. By using these few keys you can work very quickly and focus on the values in the painting.



09



10a



don't have to carefully align the photographs because they are not the main focus of the painting. These photographs will add lots of color variation and detail that you would not be able to achieve in a short time with a brush.

Apply the Soft Light blend mode (choose from the Mode pop-up menu in the options bar) to the texture layer. Use a textured brush with a layer mask to erase some areas of the photo textures; this will help to blend the photorealistic elements with the painting.

“Using a halo effect adds some realism to the painting but it also decreases the painterly look”

11 Bloom effect: Since this painting is set in a garbage processing plant and will most probably be dusty and dirty, giving a soft, diffuse look to the lighting, you will want to paint a soft halo around the lights and bright areas. Use an overlay layer to add a halo effect around the glowing areas. These areas could be physical lights in the environment or highlights from a highly reflective surface. Using

a halo effect adds some realism to the painting but it also decreases the painterly look.

12 Adjustment layers: Use a few adjustment layers to unify the color and tone of the image. Firstly, decrease the overall saturation by using a Vibrance adjustment layer (Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Vibrance), then use a Color Balance adjustment layer to add a bluish tone to the shadows, as well as making the highlight warmer. To brighten the darkest values use Curves (Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Curves), this will help to bring back some of the details that may have been lost when you applied the Color Balance layer.

13 Final touches: For the final touches you can treat everything as a single layer painting. Use different textured brushes to paint on top of the image, you will want to clean up the edges of the hard surfaces, or blur some edges to lead the viewer's eye around the painting. To enhance the atmosphere and sense of depth you can freely paint some smoke and dirt in this step, treating everything like a one layer painting. I use many kinds of textured brushes to paint on top of the image. I repaint the mech's head

at this final stage because it looks a bit flat and I want to add more character to the mech. Finally, you can apply a Sharpen filter to the whole image to bring those hard edges into focus. And with that your street cleaner mech is finished. ●

PRO TIPS

Using realistic camera lens angle

Knowing how to pick a camera lens angle is very important even if you are designing or painting from scratch. There are some basic rules for using different lenses in photography, for example, a wide angle (21mm - 35mm) lens is usually used for architecture and landscapes, and a standard lens or telephoto lens (50mm - 85mm) is best for portraits. This is just a general rule, but knowing this will help to make your paintings look more realistic. I don't usually paint in a super wide angle because a wide angle creates camera distortion.

● Use adjustment layers to make subtle changes to the overall tone of the image



The Artist



Galan Pang
galan.artstation.com

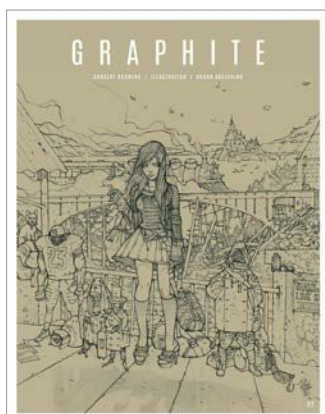
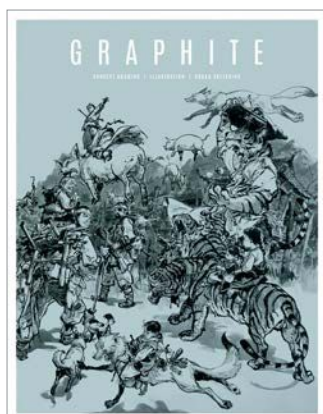
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GRAPHITE

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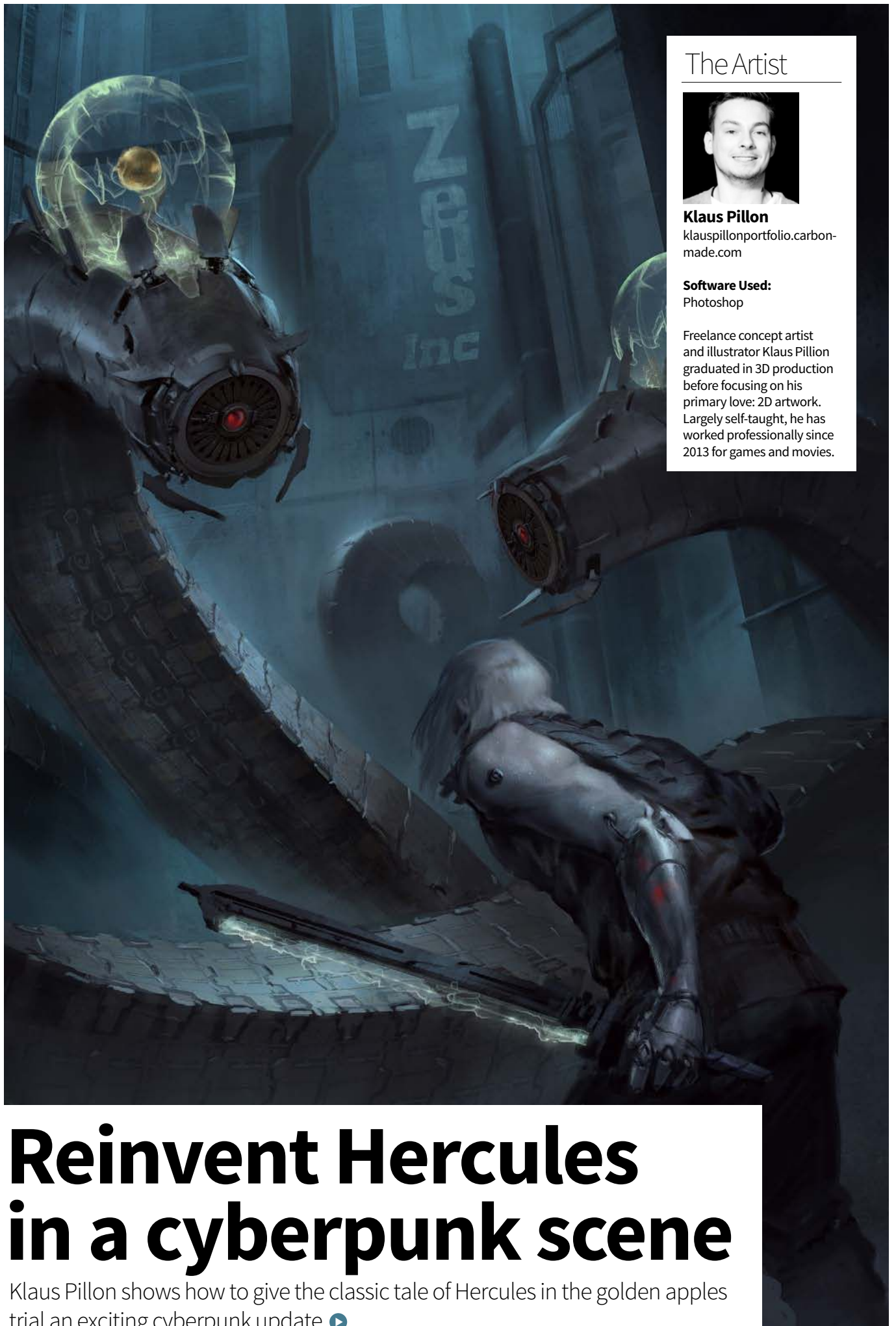


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The Artist



Klaus Pillion

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Software Used:

Photoshop

Freelance concept artist and illustrator Klaus Pillion graduated in 3D production before focusing on his primary love: 2D artwork. Largely self-taught, he has worked professionally since 2013 for games and movies.

Reinvent Hercules in a cyberpunk scene

Klaus Pillion shows how to give the classic tale of Hercules in the golden apples trial an exciting cyberpunk update ▶

Use perspective grids and textures to easily perfect a scene...

In this tutorial I will show you how to go about creating an illustration based on the myth of Hercules and the golden apples trial. I will transpose the scene into a dark, sci-fi, cyberpunk setting, stretching the story and enriching it with new details to create a fresh artwork.

This tutorial will cover the use of sketches and demonstrate through composition building how this is one of the most crucial steps of the process. I am also going to talk about the search for references; how you can approach it and how this is essential in creating believable designs and characters. You will see how I

use photo textures to speed up my process as well as ways you can use the process to make interesting choices and create happy accidents. You will also be able to see how I think about the light, rendering and amount of detail in the picture, and learn how these aspects can serve the narrative of the picture.

Since this whole tutorial is done in Photoshop, having some prior knowledge of the software would be helpful. I am also going to give you some tips and tricks that you might find useful for your projects.

01 Initial research: Let's get familiar with the myth of Hercules and the golden apples trials because knowing a small amount of detail can facilitate your creativity and help you find interesting ideas. The golden apples

were a gift from Zeus to Hera and were held hidden in a secret garden. Hercules, although instructed to steal the apples, did not actually get them himself but for this scene I choose to make him the main character anyway. Another interesting detail I learn is that the garden is guarded by a multi-headed dragon.

As cyberpunk is a setting that I find very interesting I decide to place the story in this genre. At this point make a small story without getting too caught up in the details. More details will come while you are doing the painting itself. ►

“Try to do at least two or three sketches so that you are not stuck with the first picture that comes to mind”



● A couple of depictions of Hercules provide inspiration and reading the story is definitely helpful too!

02 Sketches!: With the story in mind you can start working on some sketches. At this point, focus on the composition and placement of elements in the picture in order to reflect the feeling you are looking for. I know that I want Hercules in front of mechanical dragon heads, about to fight them for the apples.

When sketching, work with lines first to make elements like the character, and then put some values in to give the composition and depth some direction. You need to think about the readability of the focal elements (in this case Hercules and the dragon heads), which is why I decide to stay in black and white at this stage. Think in terms of silhouettes with black forms on white, and white on black.

This is the step where you can go crazy and for me it is the most fun part of the painting because you can find more ideas as you go. Try to do at least two or three sketches so that you are not stuck with the first picture that comes to mind and you are forced to think outside of the box.

03 Refine the sketch: I decide to go with the third sketch as I find the idea of having the golden apples on top of or inside the dragon heads so that Hercules cannot get to them without defeating the “security system” has interesting potential.

However, I think that Hercules’ pose is not dynamic enough; this is the critical moment before the fight so the pose of the character should be strong. Look at references for the angle and pose of the character in order to get it right. Once this is done, you will need to adjust the other elements so they all work together.

It is also a good idea to give room for the viewer’s eye to rest, and pull it to the focal point. I extend the canvas a bit and group some values together. It is very important to make changes like this early on while everything is still quite rough. You will get the strongest composition possible and avoid the pain of changing it later on.

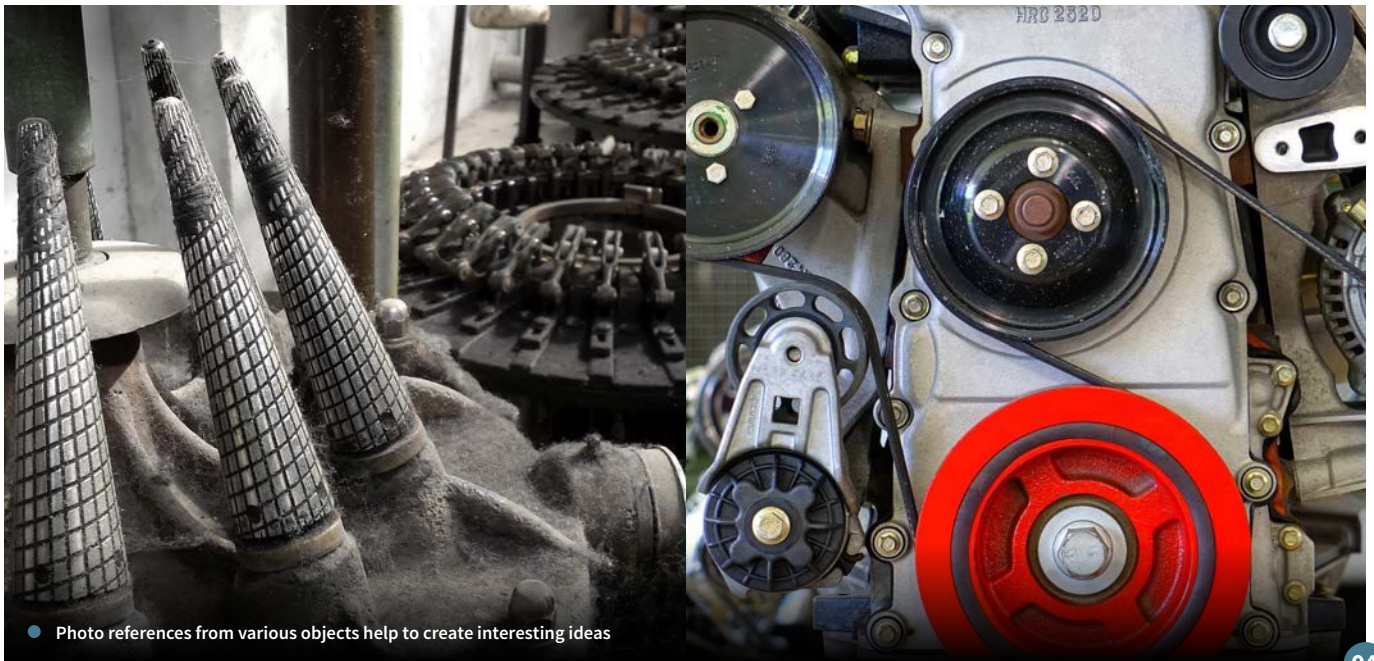
04 References: Once you have your composition, it is time to get some more references to base the design on. These will greatly help you get a level of believability but also might help you find new interesting ideas. I know that the dragon heads are mechanical so I am looking for some hard surface references



02



03



● Photo references from various objects help to create interesting ideas

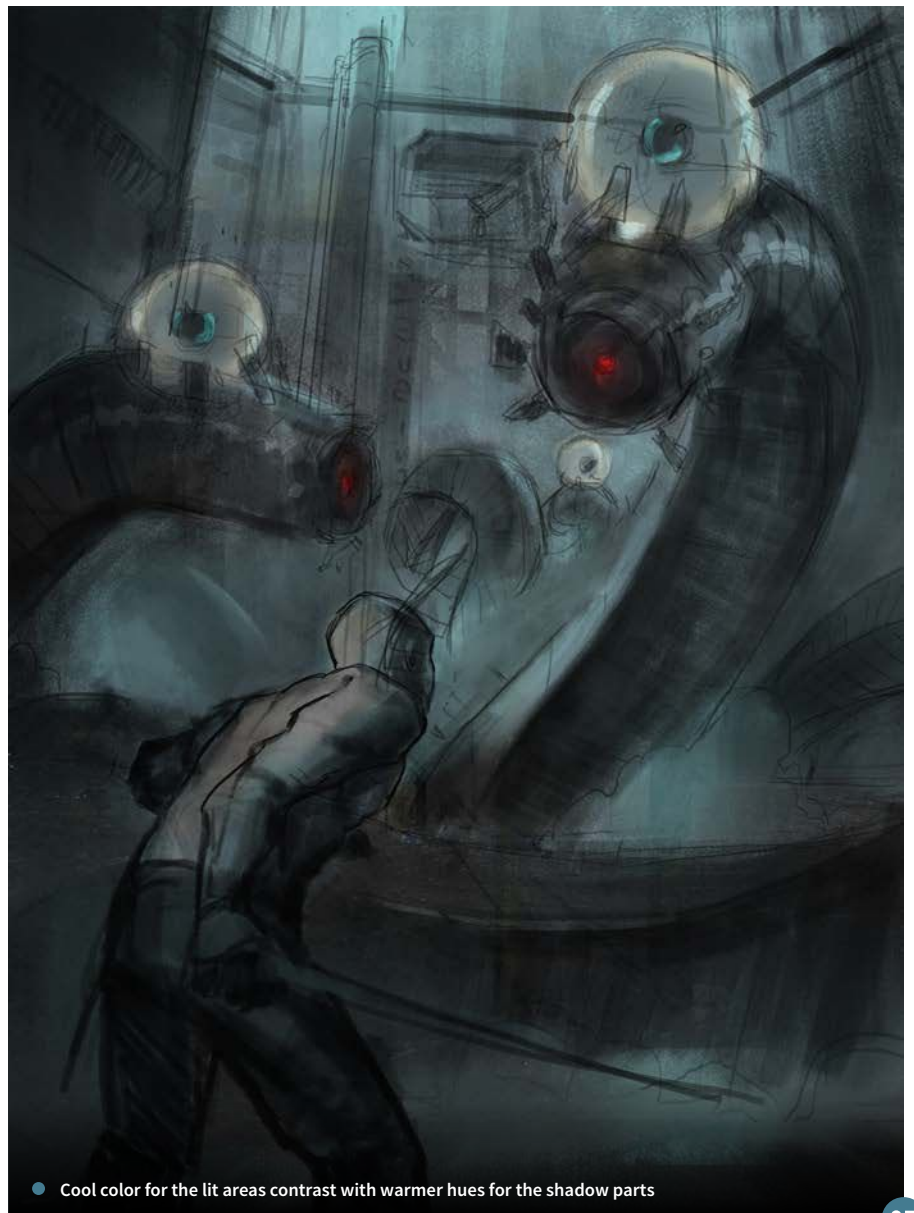
04

of machinery, thinking about how it might work based on already existing designs. On websites like textures.com or photobash.org you can gather a lot of high resolution references which you might also use in your painting.

Because this is a cyberpunk setting we need to update Hercules a little bit too, so I am researching cybernetic technology. I also research what kind of clothes he could wear. I want to give him a leather jacket, so I gather some references about it to understand how the fabric deals with light.

05 Colors: Time for some color! I like to use some photo textures that I will destroy to accommodate my needs. In this step you can play a lot with Photoshop features such as blending modes because there are so many ways to get colors into your picture.

For this one, change the line and value layers to Multiply blending mode and put the photo texture under it. I know I want a dark mood so this will help me keep the value range quite dark. I start painting on top of the photo texture to get rid of all its unnecessary details, keeping the overall color to a cold gray blue. This color will help pull the viewer's eye towards warmer hues in the focal points such as the red eye of the machines and the energy balls around the apples. Since this image is still in the early stages I do not pay too much attention to details and focus on getting the overall color composition balanced and interesting. ►



● Cool color for the lit areas contrast with warmer hues for the shadow parts

05

06 **Cut the elements:** A nice thing to do that can help enhance the dynamism of the picture is to tilt the angle a little. Before that however, it is also very useful to build a perspective grid for the background which you can check when needed.

When you feel that the composition is working and everything is ready to be detailed, cut each element of the picture onto a new layer with the Lasso tool. Having each element on its own layer can be very time saving during the detailing process. I cut the character, the foreground part of the machines, mid-ground dragon heads and background machines onto their own layers. This way you can refine the silhouettes independently by painting on each layer and remove parts by using a layer mask. It also allows you to work inside of an element by locking the pixels of each layer, or by creating a clipping mask (hold Alt+click between the layers) and then painting. I find this very effective because I can focus on one element at a time.

07 **Design the dragon:** The design of the dragon will support the whole picture because it is the main focus and also the biggest design element, so it feels natural to focus on it. Once you are happy with the design it will help you paint the rest of the picture with confidence.

I start by adding some photo textures that I previously gathered to create a design language. I am not too focused on the rendering at this point but on the shapes of the design instead. Play with the textures with the Transform tool (Ctrl+T) to adjust them to the silhouette and movement of the machine. Focus first on the eye and head of the machine because we want it to be the focal point. Once you are happy with the placement of the texture, check the values and colors, and adjust them to the rest of the picture. Then start painting on top to make it more interesting and adapted for the design.

“As gold is a tricky material to render, keep in mind that it is quite dark with jumps in values on areas that are lit directly”

08 **Design the apples:** The other design element which is on par with the dragon is the apples and the energy globes that keep them in place, so it is quite important

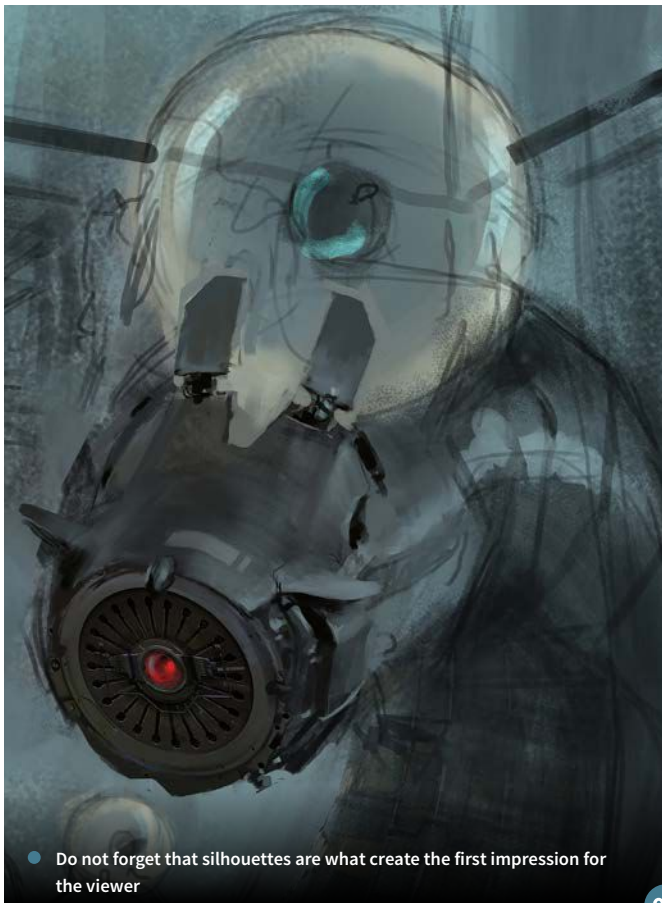
⚡ PRO TIPS

Create a design language

When looking to create a design language, think first about what kind of feeling you want your design to evoke: should it be threatening, scary, joyful, or peaceful maybe? Look at nature to study which shapes are best to use. The human brain has been conditioned over thousands of years to react in certain ways when placed in front of certain conditions or animals, for example. You can then use and adapt the same shapes, colors and so on in your own design to emulate the feeling you want to convey.



● Having a perspective grid can help with the overall depth and scale



● Do not forget that silhouettes are what create the first impression for the viewer

07



● Exploring different Photoshop features can help you come up with interesting results

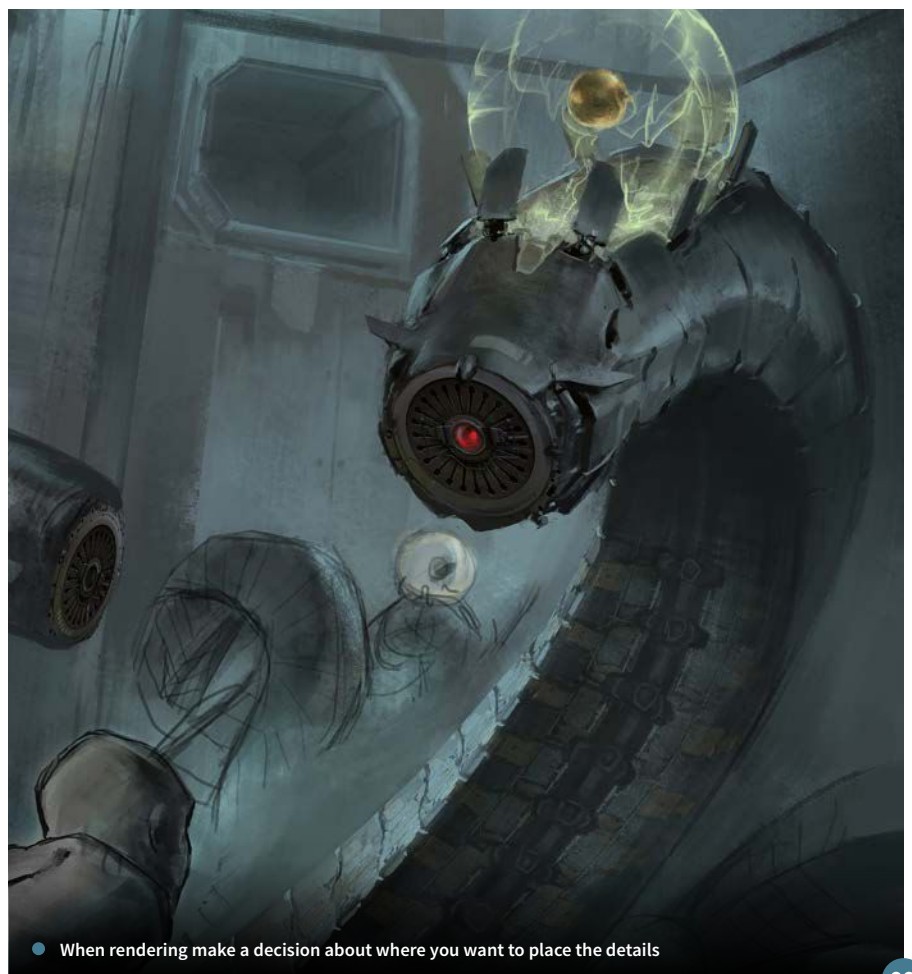
08

and ideal to tackle in the first phase of the rendering. In order to do it, first erase the sketch part that is not needed, and then start working on the silhouette at the opening of the head.

It is time for the apple, and as gold is a tricky material to render, keep in mind that it is quite dark with jumps in values on areas that are lit directly. Then use the Elliptical selection tool (Ctrl+M) to make a selection that will give you sharp edges for the energy globe. Using a couple of different brushes, try to make interesting shapes that seem to support the golden apples, like a magnetic field. Do not use a color that is too light because we will use a layer effect to make it more interesting.

By double clicking on the layer you can access the Layer Style window, it is nice to play and try different things here as you can get interesting results depending on what you are looking for. Here I am using an Inner Glow set on Color Dodge.

09 Refine the dragon: Once you have the main design elements of the dragon done, start rendering the rest of the body, keeping in mind the light sources, and also trying not to go too far on the detailing. We still ►



● When rendering make a decision about where you want to place the details

09

want its head to attract the viewer's eye, and knowing where to put the detail is essential.

This is also the point where you can go to the background layer, and start working on it to see where the tangents might be so they can be removed. Still keep it loose and rough because you do not want it to be unnecessarily detailed before the other elements are done.

10 **Hercules!:** It is now time to work on the character, Hercules. In order to give him a cyberpunk feeling I want him to wear a

leather jacket, and also to have a robotic body part. These are pretty conventional codes to use, but by finding good references you can push the design to make it more interesting.

Start with the leather jacket, pulling a photo into the picture, and adjusting it with the Transform tool to fit the pose of the character. Do not forget that you can also use the Warp function which can be very useful in this case.

Use some adjustment layers, such as Levels and Color Balance, as clipping masks to make

the values and hues of the photograph fit the rest of the picture. You can then use a clipping mask set on Darken mode to darken the areas that are too bright, and use another clipping mask on Normal mode to paint the highlights so that the lighting fits the rest of the scene.

You can then go back to it to adjust the design and make it a bit more interesting and futuristic. You can use this technique for almost everything, bashing together a few photos and adapting them can help you save time and effort so that you can concentrate on the design.



● Good anatomical references and understanding are essential when painting characters

10



● Always put more contrast in your focal point, whether it be with values or colors

11

“Hair can be tricky to render, but I find that grouping the values gives some nice results”

11 Polish the character: The last steps for the character are his hair and weapon. For the hair, try a few different hair colors but it should be quite light to help the contrast between the character and background. This is the type of decision that you should make not only for the design of the character, but for the whole composition too. So white hair it is going to be! Hair can be tricky to render, but I find that grouping the values gives some nice results. You can also paint some highlights on his arm to make it look a bit sweaty or moist, using a couple of textured brushes and some references on the side.

After this, go back to the dragon head and finish the second head based on the design of the one already done. At this point the composition

feels a bit weird and the focus on the dragons is not strong enough, so in order to enhance that you can add more contrast. Darken the background with a layer set on Multiply to make the light reflection on the dragon stand out more from the background, and redirect the viewer's eye around the center of the picture.

12 Finish the dragon: Now that all the principal elements of the picture are almost finished we can focus on the rest of the scene. Before going further with the background it is better to finish the remaining dragon parts

because they help with the movement of the picture. The bottom part of the dragon should be reflecting the light from above, so take a texture from another part of the dragon and transform it to fit the movement of the monster. With the same technique used in step 11, adjust the texture to the values and colors. Use a layer mask to paint where you want it to show through, such as the lit areas and a little at the bottom where the light is reflected on the ground. Then paint on top of it again to fit the design and make it more three dimensional. Using a smoke brush, blend the bottom of ▶

⚡ PRO TIPS

Have a clean file

It is very useful to have the different elements organized on separate layers as this might help you gain a lot of time when applying feedbacks and changes. This is especially true when doing production work. It can be a pain if your Photoshop file is messy, but naming your layers and grouping them together can save you a lot of time. It will help you avoid some harsh mistakes during the process, and while doing professional work it also helps the people down the line who will be working with your file.



● Be careful not to clutter the image and always leave some breathing space

12

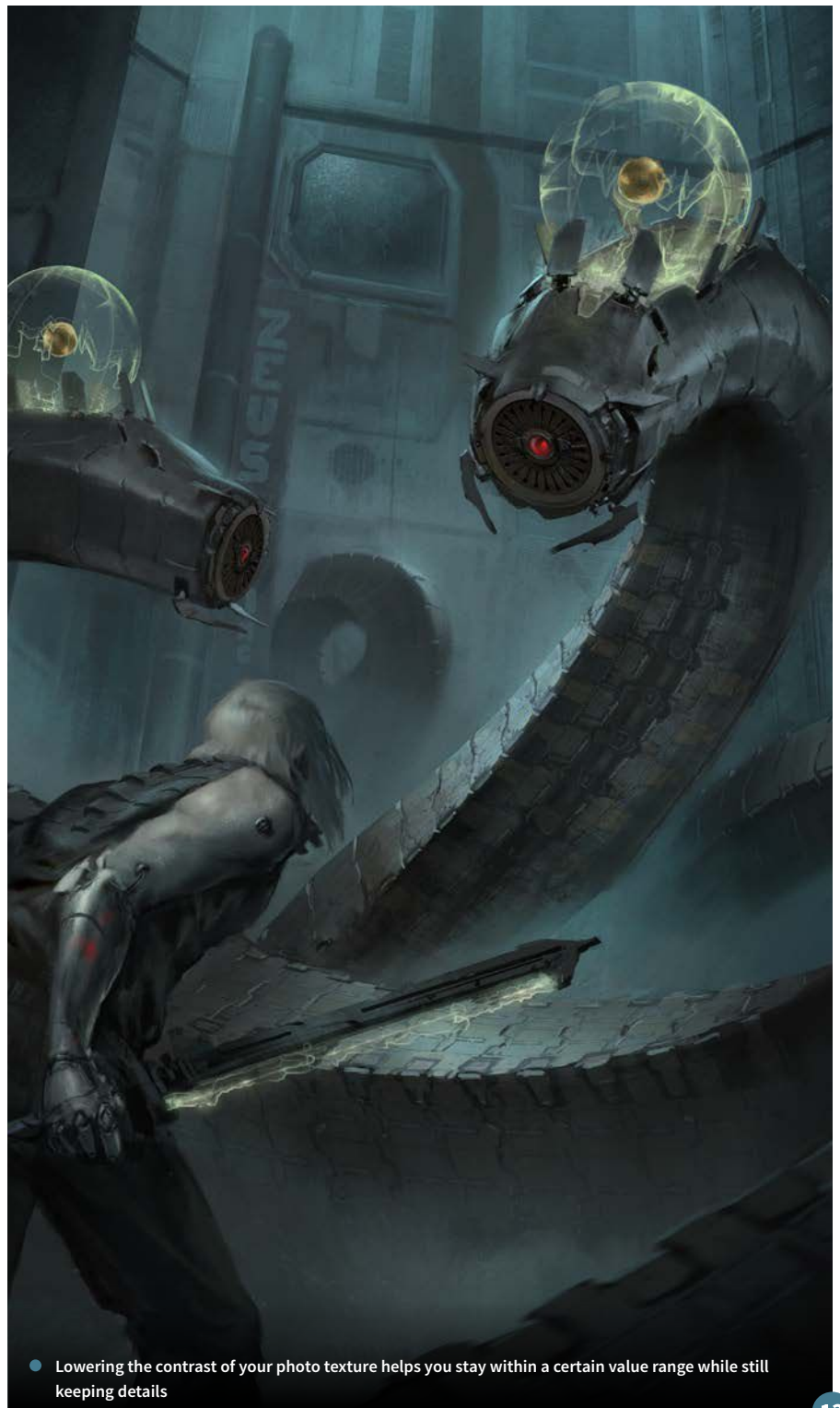
the texture with the ground, focusing on the edge where the part is lit. I choose to remove one of the background elements to simplify the composition and make a triangular space between the two dragon heads and the character.

13 Texture the background: Using a couple of photos, and the same technique as before, you can go on to texture the background. Be careful with the scale of your texture as it might easily make the whole scene seem wrong, this is however a very nice way to create small details which help to sell the overall scale of the place. Using the perspective grid you created before can also help a lot.

Paint with colors that are slightly different in value and saturation to give a sense of different materials. I use the Polygonal Lasso tool a lot at this stage as it gives nice crisp edges. I also move the opening on the background wall to the left slightly to avoid any tangent feeling with the dragon. Having a foreground element can help attract the viewer into the scene, so I also quickly create a new part of the dragon moving in front of the camera. This helps to reinforce the feeling that Hercules is in for a tough time. You can also give the dragon heads a couple of antennae to make the silhouette a bit more threatening, using hard, pointy shapes.

14 Final touches: At this stage the picture feels almost ready but I notice that the opening on the top is not working very well with the rest of the elements. The rhythm feels a bit off and the image is too cluttered; it needs some rest areas between the focal points. So I remove this part by painting on top of it and adding instead some text with the Text tool. Transform the text according to the perspective grid, being careful not to make it stand out too much, and then paint texture inside it.

I also flip the picture because the text works better this way and make a few adjustments to the colors and contrast using a Levels and a Color Balance adjustment layer. You can also play with the other adjustment layers to see what works best. I complete the picture by scaling it down to make details a bit crisper and create a low opacity, new gray layer with a Grain filter on Overlay mode to give a uniform texture to the whole image. ●



● Lowering the contrast of your photo texture helps you stay within a certain value range while still keeping details

13

PRO TIPS

Thumbnails and sketching

When possible, do more than just a couple of sketches or thumbnails, as the first ones might just help you get rid of the preconceived ideas that pop up in your mind by putting them onto a canvas. You are then forced to think outside of the box, and this is the time you can get very creative, find interesting ideas, and show your problem solving skills. A good thing is also to work quite small at this stage so you do not fall into the trap of detailing too much early on.



The Artist



Klaus Pillon

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The Artist



Zac Retz

zacretz.com

Software Used:

Photoshop

Zac Retz graduated with a BFA in illustration in 2012. Since then he has illustrated the children's book *Too Much Glue*, worked at Workinman Interactive, Reel FX, and currently works for Sony Pictures Animation.

Plein air paint a factory: Daytime

Zac Retz shows how to tackle a digital plein air study of an industrial factory in daylight ▶





Learn to quickly capture the essence of an industrial, hard-surface environment...

In this tutorial I will take you through my steps as I paint outside and try to capture the subject in front of me. I will use an iPad mini, the Procreate app, and the Intuos Creative Stylus 2. If you do not have an iPad or this specific stylus, do not worry. This tutorial can be applied to any digital or traditional medium you prefer. Do not worry if you don't have a fancy stylus as the cheap ones work well, or you can just use your finger!

I am excited for this tutorial because plein air painting is a great passion of mine. I believe it is necessary for any artist who wants to grow their knowledge in natural color, shape, and lighting to study outside. I attribute much of my ability in this industry to the many hours I have spent outside painting.

I generally paint outside using acrylic paint or my iPad. Most of the time I will use traditional paints because I do not have to deal with the digital screen and the glare. It is always good to take a break from technology too. The iPad on the other hand is super portable and so easy to take out and do a sketch quickly. It is especially great when painting at night!

For this painting I am lucky enough to have an overcast day, so I do not need to find shelter from the sun beating down. Through the next few pages I will break down this fairly complicated industrial landscape into simple and manageable steps. My hope is to show you how to simplify complex subjects and create appealing paintings.

01 **The block-in:** This initial step is very important; this is where you try different compositions, and set up the painting to be a success. Walk around the subject to find the most interesting angle to paint from. Pay attention to the silhouettes, groups of dark and light values, and interesting color relationships of your subject.

It is very important to find a shaded area as you do not want direct sunlight hitting your screen. I also recommend wearing a black shirt because whatever color top you are wearing will be reflected on the screen.



● Walk around your subject, looking for interesting value structures and shapes

01



● Squint your eyes and quickly block-in the painting in as few brushstrokes as possible

02



● Think about color relationships and how the exterior walls of the factory are affected by the cool temperature of the sky

03

Once you have found your spot, block-in the big shapes. I primarily use the Nikko Rull brush under the Painting brush section in Procreate. I find it best to use as few brushes as possible when painting. If you are constantly changing brushes then you are constantly breaking focus and wasting time.

“Keep your brush size really big and the canvas zoomed out so it is small on your screen”

02 **Capturing the subject:** At this point you know general where the

big shapes in your painting will be placed, so squint your eyes and paint the whole scene in as few brushstrokes as possible. By squinting, it becomes hard to see small details that do not matter at this point of the painting. Keep your brush size really big and the canvas zoomed out so it is small on your screen. Capturing the essence of the painting really quickly like this, gives you a feel for the painting early in the process before you have invested too much time.

Try to get fairly accurate values and color at this point. Leave out the darkest dark and lightest light for now. We want to build up to those more intense values and place them in the correct spots as the painting moves forward.

03 Shadow temperatures: Continue to block-in your painting, only shrinking the brush a little to allow for some slight details, and refine the silhouette of the factory. My painting is mostly mid or light tones, so it is important to add in the dark tones now. Most of the darks are shadow areas inside and under the factory. These shadows will be warm in temperature because they will be affected by little or no atmosphere.

These dark shadows are unlike cast shadows which will be cool in temperature because they are affected by the sky color. The local color of the factory is a warm tan color so I choose a darker version of this for the interior shadows. Think about how these warm shadows will play nicely with the primarily cooler exterior walls of the factory.

04 Reworking the composition: Remember earlier when I mentioned blocking-in your painting with a big brush and not spending too much time on it? Well this is a perfect example. I am not happy with the composition and colors so I quickly paint over everything. I adjust the composition; group the values more and warm up the colors in the factory. I decide to run the shape of the factory off the top of the canvas to fill the composition better and suggest that the factory is very large. I feel this will create more impact in the painting. ►

“You are the artist and you can add, change or get rid of elements in the painting to create a more pleasing piece of art”



● Keep reworking your shapes to get a composition and value structure you are pleased with

04

PRO TIPS

Lost edges

As you paint think about the edges of your brushstrokes. You do not want to define every object in your painting or your painting will become over complicated with no focal point. A way to control this is by losing some of the subject's edges in your painting. Usually you will want to do this on objects outside your focal point. In this example my brushwork becomes more abstract with less defined edges, so it does not demand too much attention from the viewer.



05 **Take a step back:** At this point I am happy with my block-in. Take a moment to step back from your painting and compare your work to the subject. Check to see if you have captured the general feeling of the environment. Look at the accuracy of your shapes, and values.

Something to keep in mind is that you are not trying to make a perfect replica of this scene. You are the artist and you can add, change or get rid of elements in the painting to create a more pleasing piece of art.

As you observe your work so far, think about where the most detail should be and what parts of the environment you should leave out.

06 **Medium sized shapes:** We now need to start breaking down the big shapes in the composition into slightly smaller shapes. Start to make the silhouette of the factory more accurate and add in more structure. As you are refining your work think about the colors you use.

Mix a bit of the sky color into the exterior walls of the factory as some of these sky colors will affect the local colors of the factory. At this point you can also block in the foreground.

Make sure you do not spend too much time in any one area of the painting. Jumping around your painting will help you to develop the painting as a whole and not get caught up on any specific area.

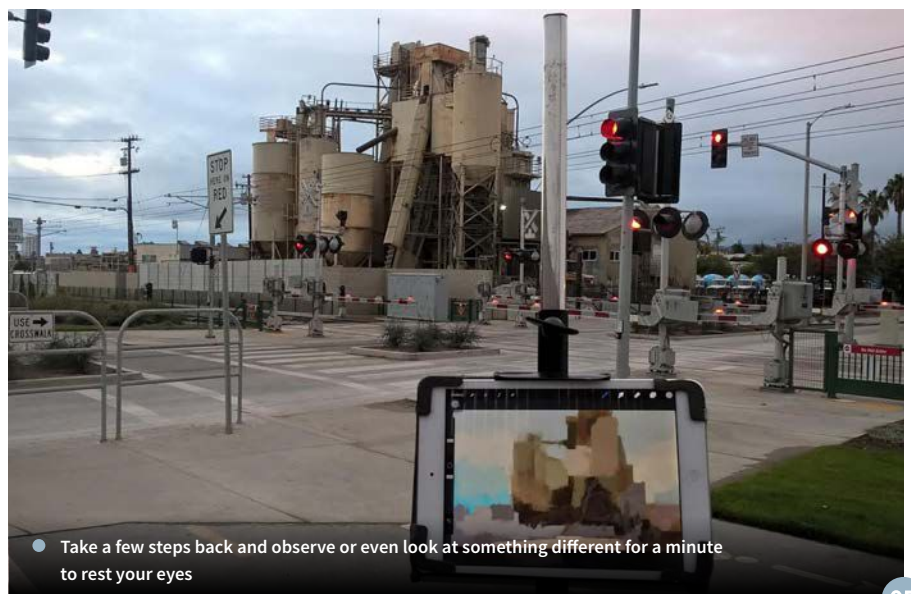
07 **Controlled detail:** It is now time to start adding some of those finer lines and smaller shapes such as signs, electrical boxes, and structural beams. As you add in some of these details, try to trick your brain into not thinking about the specific objects. For example as I am painting, I do not think about painting the railway sign, I just think about that area of the painting and the values, colors and shapes that represent forms. Think about your painting as an abstract scene made up of light, color and value.

08 **Areas of rest:** I was drawn to this factory for many reasons but something that really stood out to me was

how there are nice areas of detail and other areas with less detail that allow your eye to rest. For example, in the dark areas under the cylinder shapes there are a lot of intricate supporting beams and mechanical parts.

These are balanced by the simpler cylinder forms above it. Try to maintain a nice balance like this as you are painting. Keep most of the detail grouped

“Do a few small color sketches to learn as much as you can about different lighting situations and colors”



05



● Work on large shapes first, then medium, and finally small shapes

06



● Capture the way the light affects the object instead of trying to render out all the specific elements

07



● Look for areas of detail and balance them with simpler areas to create resting points for the viewer's eye

08

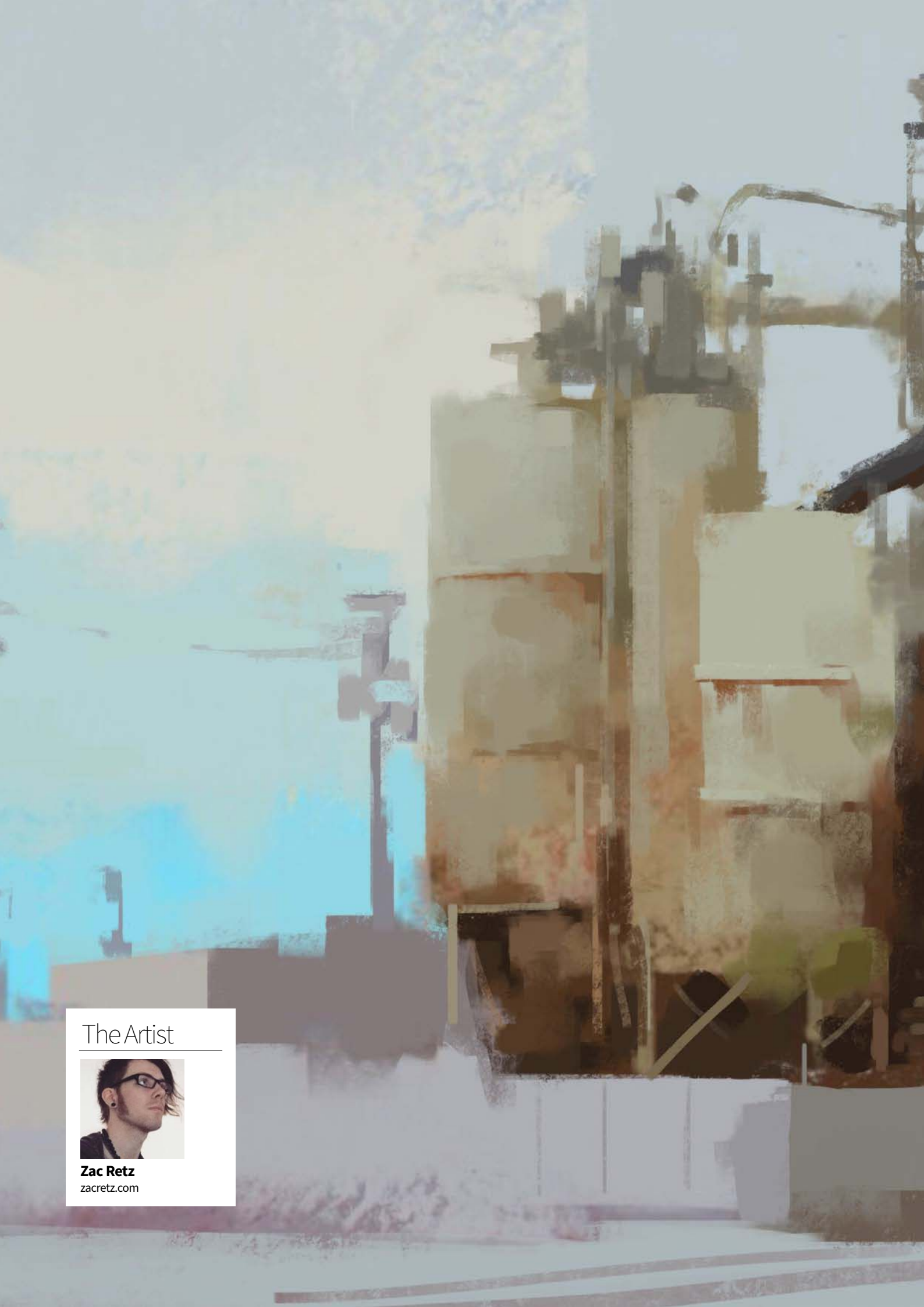
within the central dark area of the painting, creating a nice focal point with strong contrast.

09 **Finishing touches:** I am a strong believer in keeping your plain air paintings quick, allowing you to just capture the lighting and create a believable scene.

When you go out painting do a few small color sketches to learn as much as you can about different lighting situations and colors.

If you spend hours on a painting, the chances are that the lighting when you finish will be completely different from when you started.

Usually I will spend about thirty to forty minutes on a plein air painting. I spend more time on this one because I want to push it a bit further for this tutorial and the overcast weather allows me to do so. I push the details in the focal points and add a red light in the foreground which creates a nice pop of color. That brings this painting to an end! ●



The Artist

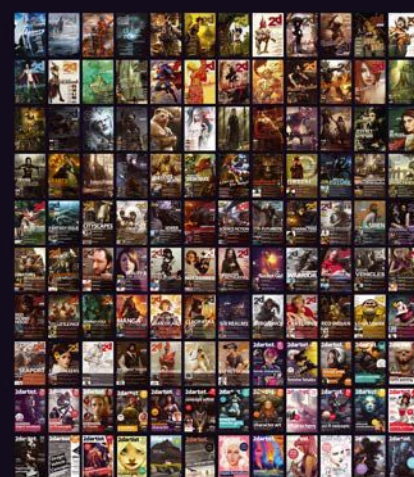


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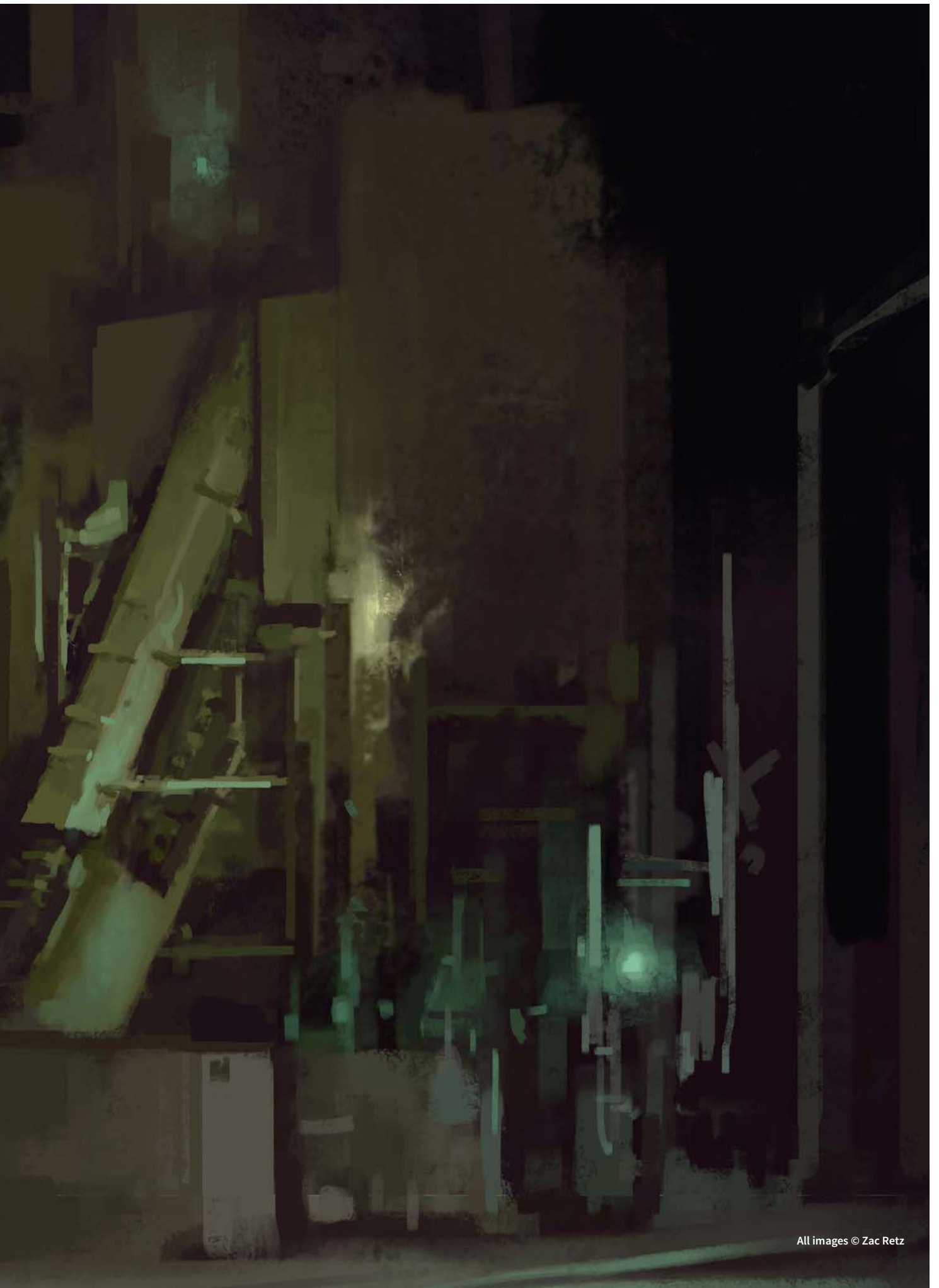
Software Used:
Photoshop

Zac Retz graduated with a BFA in illustration in 2012. Since then he has illustrated the children's book *Too Much Glue*, worked at Workinman Interactive, Reel FX, and currently works for Sony Pictures Animation.

Plein air paint a factory: Night-time

Having tackled a daytime scene, Zac Retz shares his advice for plein air painting an industrial environment at night ▶





Learn how night-time conditions affect light and local color...

Following on from the previous tutorial we will study how to paint the same environment in night-time conditions. Painting at night can be very challenging but I will explain a few ways to think about the colors and light to make night painting more manageable and fun! I have worked on a couple movies that have required me to design sets that take place primarily at night. These night paintings have helped me to understand how light and color work under these conditions, plus it is a lot of fun exploring and painting at night! As in the previous tutorial I will be working on an iPad mini using the Procreate app and the Intuos Creative Stylus 2, but again these techniques can be applied to any digital or traditional medium.

01 Painting at night: Handle step one in a similar way as step one of the day scene by blocking-out the big shapes with a large brush. The main difference between painting in daylight and at night is that at night the lights eliminate only parts of objects, whereas in daylight there is much more of the environment lit up. Pick out the strongest light sources and group the masses of light together. This will form the focal point of your painting. Do not try to paint each little light.

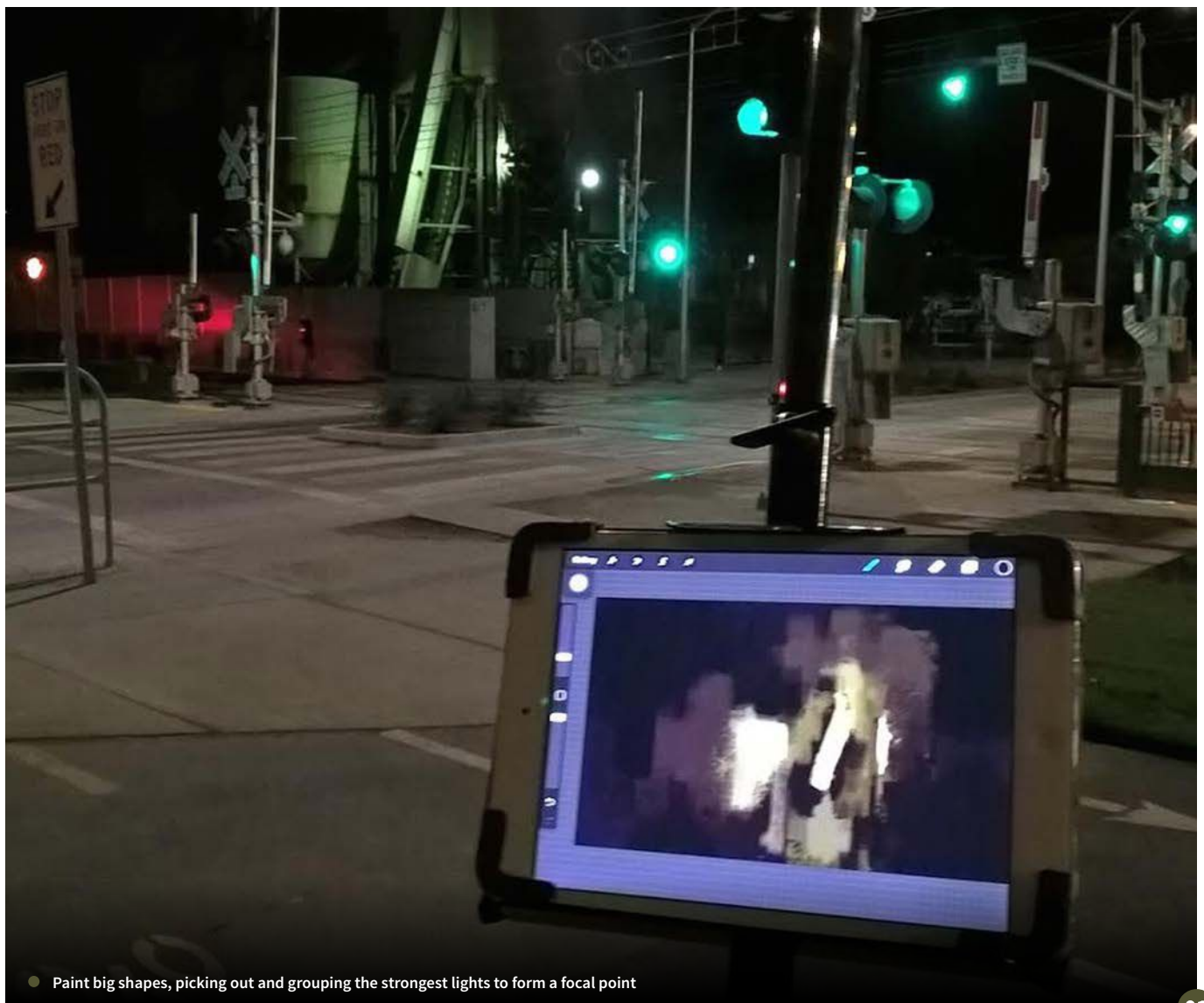
“If you are in a city with a lot of light pollution then you can almost always count on the sky being a warm color”

02 Sky color: When using dark colors it can often be very hard to see what the local color actually is. If you are in a city with a lot of light pollution then you can almost always count on the sky being a warm color.

In Los Angeles I have observed that the night sky is a warm purple color most nights.

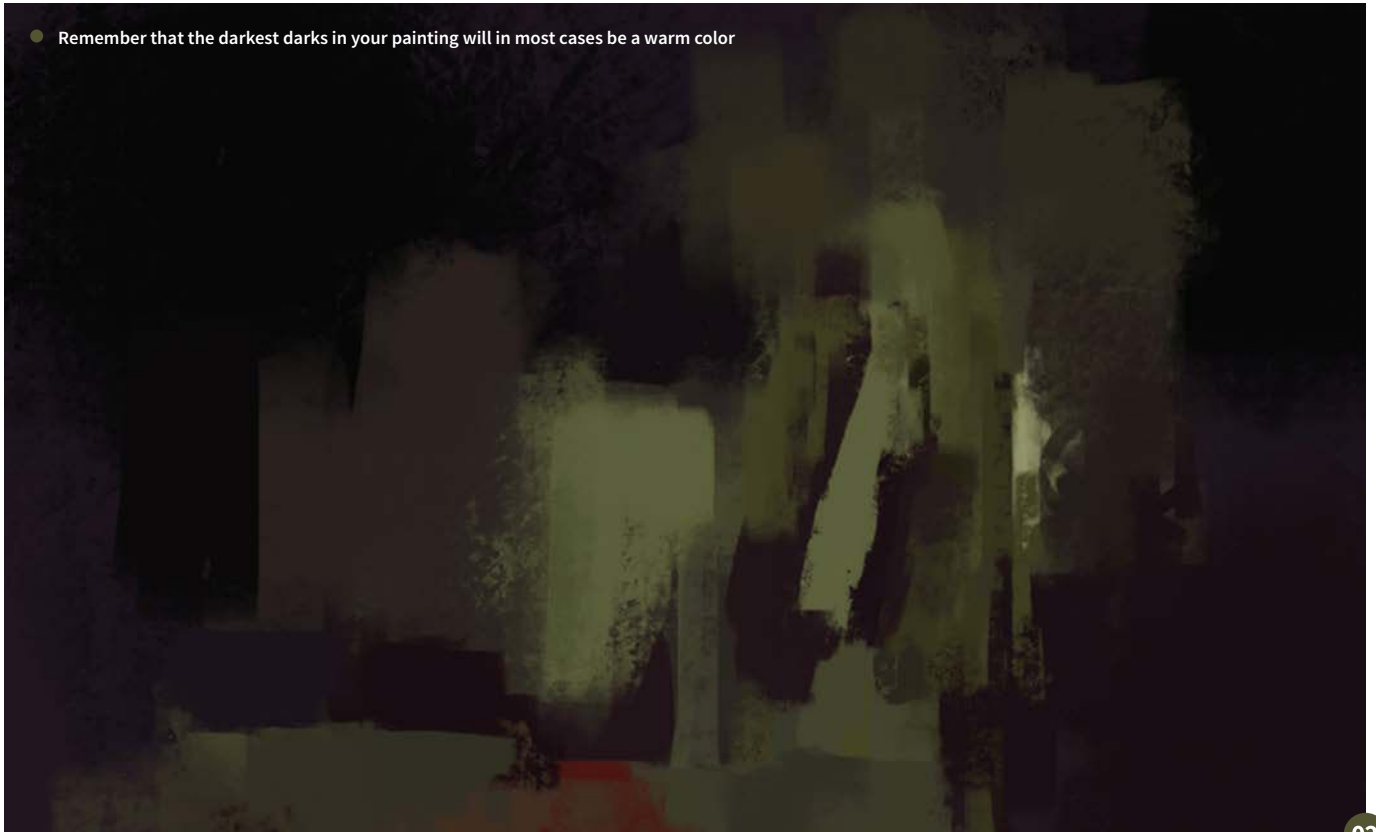
Sometimes the sky will shift to more orange or red colors depending on how dense the atmosphere is. If there are more clouds or smog closer to the ground then you will see more orange in the sky. This is because the orange and yellow lights from the city affect the clouds more directly. If the clouds were higher up in the sky then the light from the city would have to pass through more atmosphere before it hits cloud. As the light moves through the atmosphere it gets diluted into the cool night sky, therefore the purple colors increase. This will differ from place to place, but these are my observations from the area I live in.

03 Local colors and lights: As you block in your forms think about how the sky color (a deep purple in this case) is affecting the factory. My forms become more



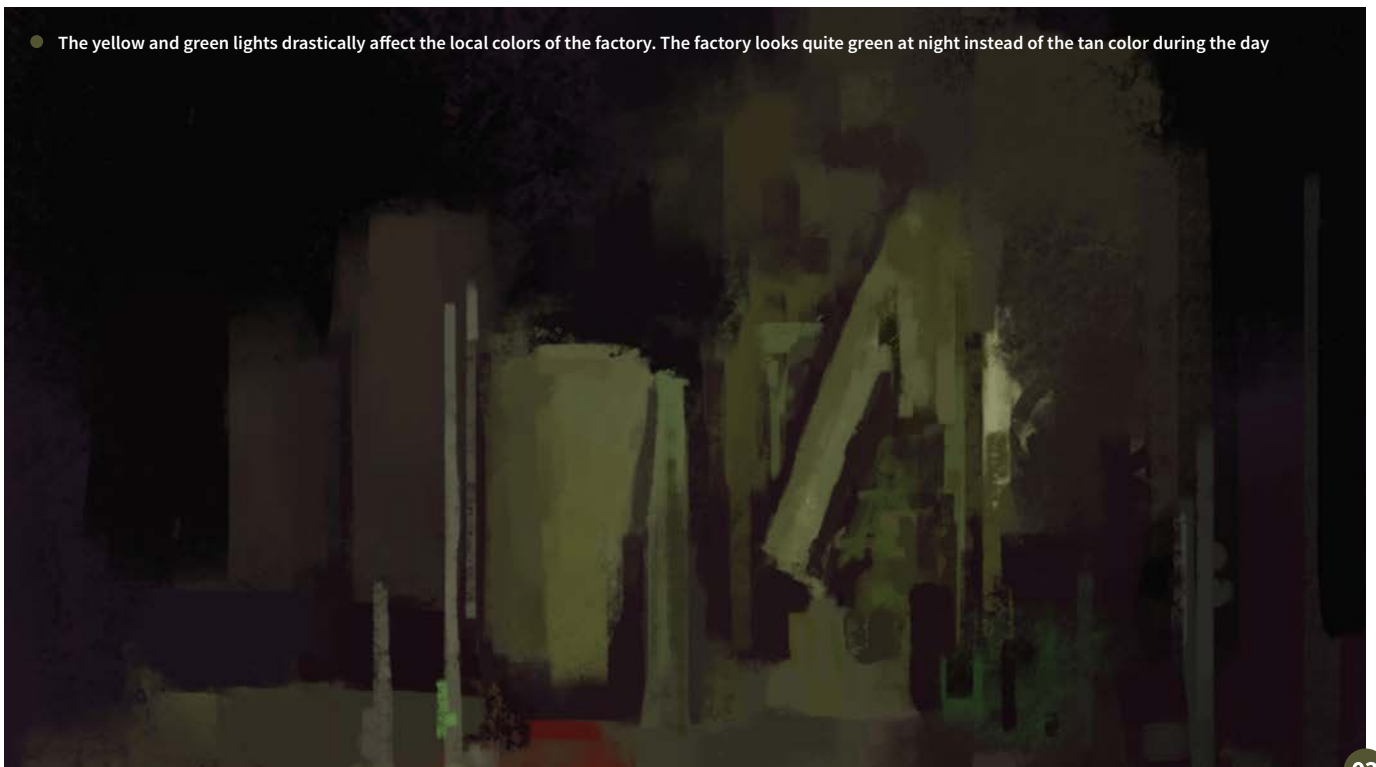
● Paint big shapes, picking out and grouping the strongest lights to form a focal point

- Remember that the darkest darks in your painting will in most cases be a warm color



02

- The yellow and green lights drastically affect the local colors of the factory. The factory looks quite green at night instead of the tan color during the day



03

red and purple as they move back into space and take on more of the warm sky color.

At night lights will affect the colors of the scene very drastically. There are yellow and green lights that light portions of the factory and a red light in the foreground from a train crossing

sign. The train crossing sign constantly changes from red to green which is an added challenge. I choose to paint the red light to create a red and green complement in my painting.

04 Refine the focal point: Now that you have figured out the colors and basic

shapes of the scene, you can start to refine them. The focal point of my painting is a conveyor belt and long diagonal rectangle shape. This is a nice point of contrast and area of detail. At this point we need to pay closer attention to the light and shadows. The portion of the factory that is lit up becomes a greenish hue ►

and the green intensifies on surfaces closer to the light source. The lights in this scene are casting strong shadows that really give form to the different sections of the factory.

“Pick areas around the image to refine and as you do this, think about how the viewer’s eye will travel around the painting”

05 Areas of rest: As you get close to finishing the painting, pay close attention to where you are adding details. You do not want to detail every part of the image as this will make for an overcomplicated and unappealing painting. Pick areas around the image to refine and as you do this, think about how the viewer’s eye will travel around the painting. Your goal is to create a balance between areas of detail and areas of rest (or

areas with a lack of detail) which will help to move the viewer’s eyes around the image. Of course the most detail should be in the focal point, along with highest contrast.

06 Photoshop tweaks: I do not usually do this with my plein air sketches, but for the sake of this tutorial I want to fix a few things in Photoshop. This is the great thing about using the Procreate app; you can



PRO TIPS

Painting lights at night

When you are painting lights at night, and their nearby objects, think first about the local color of the object without the light. Then mix the light into those local colors. This allows you to focus on the shapes first and then apply the correct lighting.

Paint the actual light then mix that color into the local colors of the surrounding objects. As you do this keep in mind that there are some particles in the air, like dust from the factory. The light will pick up on these particles creating a greenish glow around this area. This really helps to sell the lighting in a night scene.



- Keep your brushwork loose but work on smaller forms, tightening up the edges around your focal point



04

- Balance areas of detail with areas of simple form to lead the viewers eye around the image



05

send your file as a PSD. In Photoshop, shrink the image down to make room for a ground plane. This makes for a better composition that does not feel cropped at the bottom. I add a bit more green light hitting parts of the factory to create more contrast in the focal point.

To finish, double check your image by flipping it horizontally and vertically to help you catch any mistakes. And with that, we are done! I hope you have learned something that you can build on and apply in your own plein air paintings. Thanks for reading! ●

The Artist



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Design a sci-fi butler's costume

Concept artist Albert Urmanov shows how to design a detailed costume and accessories suitable for a sci-fi butler character ▶





The Artist



Albert Urmanov

artstation.com/artist/albyu

Software Used:

Photoshop

Albert Urmanov is a concept artist and illustrator based in Germany. He freelanced to get experience while working as a graphic designer, and now works as a concept artist at InnoGames.

Get tips for creating a flowing design and managing your files...

This tutorial will show you the basic principles of how you can design any concept for any project, but in this specific case we will design a costume for a sci-fi butler. When it comes to creating concepts, no matter what the task is, there are always rules and principles that you can apply to create some amazing designs!

When I hear the word butler, I instantly have an image in mind of a gentleman wearing a black suit and moving with elegance; always there when his master needs his assistance. It is mostly big, rich households that have butlers, which means he is very busy managing the household's staff. This is basically my inspiration for the concept.

If you have the time, try to incorporate meanings, metaphors and function into shapes and designs. Of course you can scribble around and come up with cool shapes that depict the characteristics of objects, but I prefer designs that are reasonable and make sense for the character. So, before going into sketching try to figure out what the functions of a butler are. How do they usually look? Why do they usually look that way? What is their history? Do butlers differ from culture to culture? Also there is the sci-fi aspect. What is sci-fi? What elements can you add to make a regular butler look like a sci-fi butler? After doing some research I learn that a

butler should usually have qualities like being discrete, unobtrusive, friendly but not familiar, graceful and precise. A butler usually serves meals to his masters, manages the household and staff and keeps the house clean, as well as welcoming guests. He is usually the oldest of the staff members and does no dirty work. So now that I have collected some thoughts on the concept we will start working on the design.

01 Sketch the pose: Before working on the costume make a quick sketch of the body, so that you can later put the costume on top of it. This will help you to define how the costume will fit, where the different fabric folds will be and how the body is affecting them.

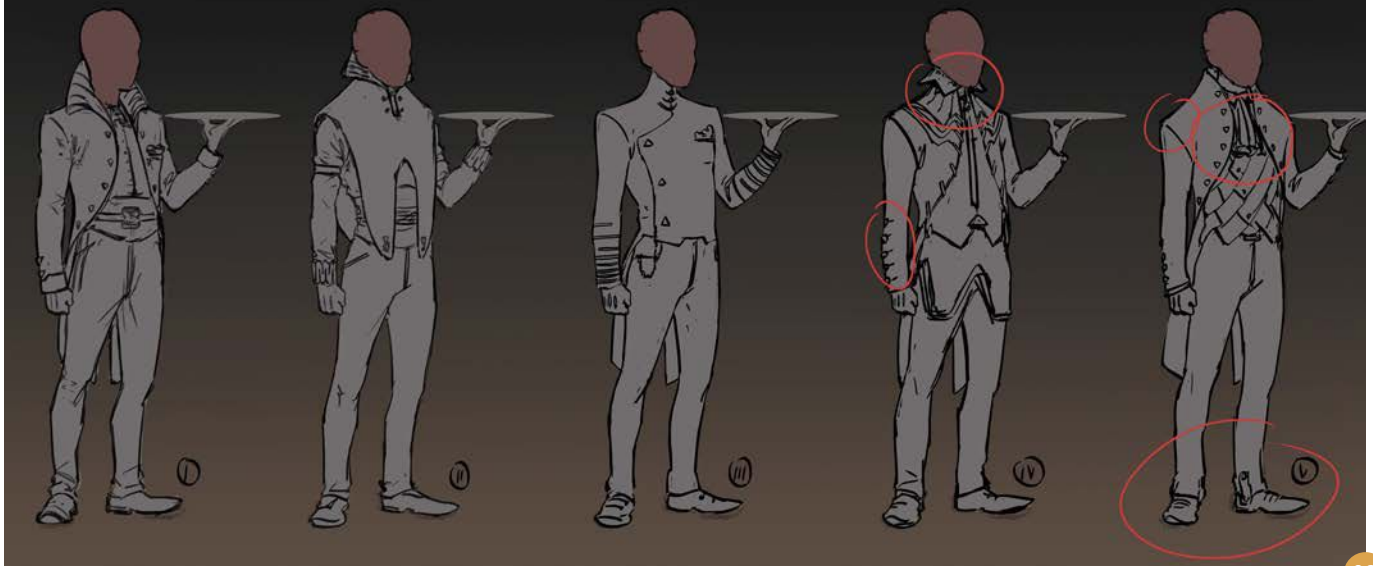
I pick a casual pose where the butler is ready to serve a drink, but at this point you could depict a pose which the character will often hold later in a game or movie. This can convey a better understanding of the character since body posture and language are very, very important!

02 Costume variations: With the pose decided create several costume designs with slight variations. What you are looking for is an elegant silhouette with interesting elements. Since the brief is open and does not specify where this concept will be used (in games the silhouette of costumes and characters is very important compared to in movies) keep this design grounded. Do not go crazy with the design elements, since a butler should not be distracting. A simple outfit is welcome.



01

● Experiment with an official looking costume and interesting elements based on symbols and functions



02

“Figuring out the shapes and designs is the hardest part of any concept and also the one that is the most fun”

03 **Secure the design:** Figuring out the shapes and designs is the hardest part of any concept and also the one that is the most fun! I like some elements in sketches four and five (circled in image 02) and I think it would be cool to incorporate the butler's functions and meanings into his costume.

Since he is the head of a pyramid-like hierarchy of staff, his jacket could form a triangular shape towards the butler's face like a pyramid or an arrow. His collar has similar shapes to a star suggesting he is shining like a star in the sky; a guiding light. His vest too has stylized roses symbolizing his staff members. They are under his command (under his jacket) and he takes care of them like a gardener takes care of his flowers.

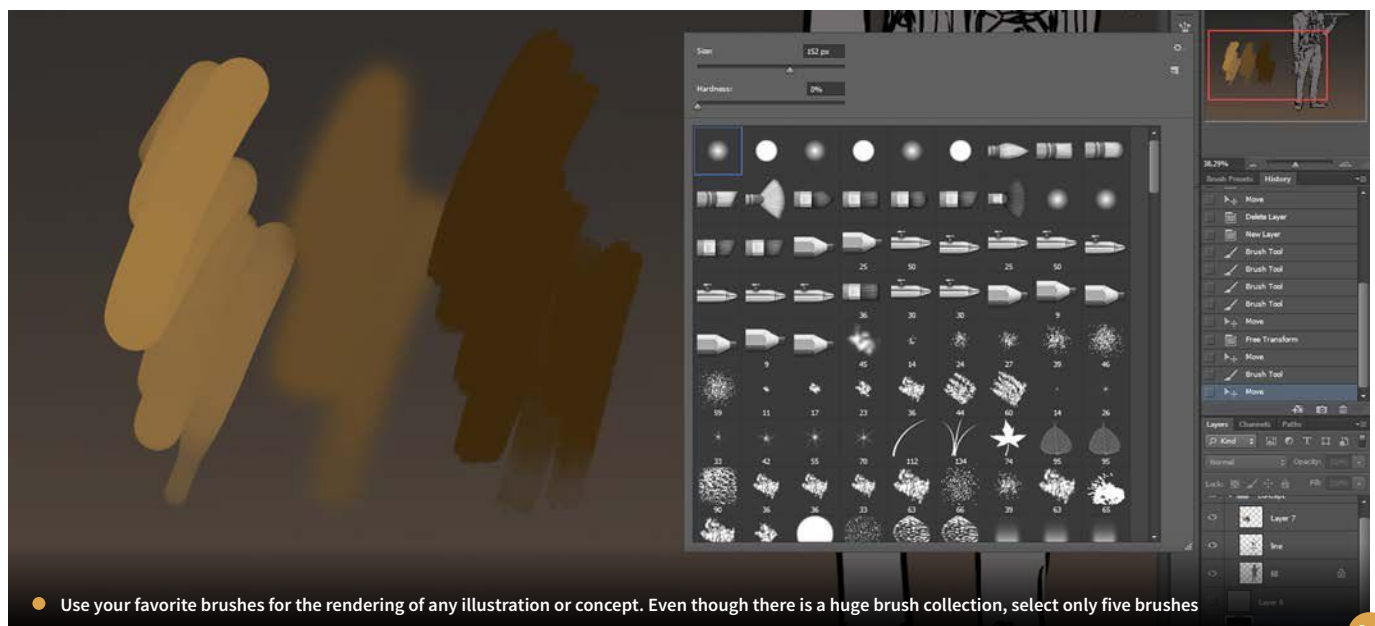
Then, regarding the sci-fi elements, his arm buttons are actual buttons that activate his helper drones. The button lines are LED lights, with green indicating that a drone is free and blue shows that a drone is busy. Finally, on his hip he has a tablet device that helps him manage his daily routine.

04 **Render time:** Even though thinking of the design is fun, rendering and painting stuff is fun too! So for rendering use the standard Soft Round brush, the standard Round brush and a custom brush with an interesting texture. Recently, I also discovered the Mixer brush; it's ►



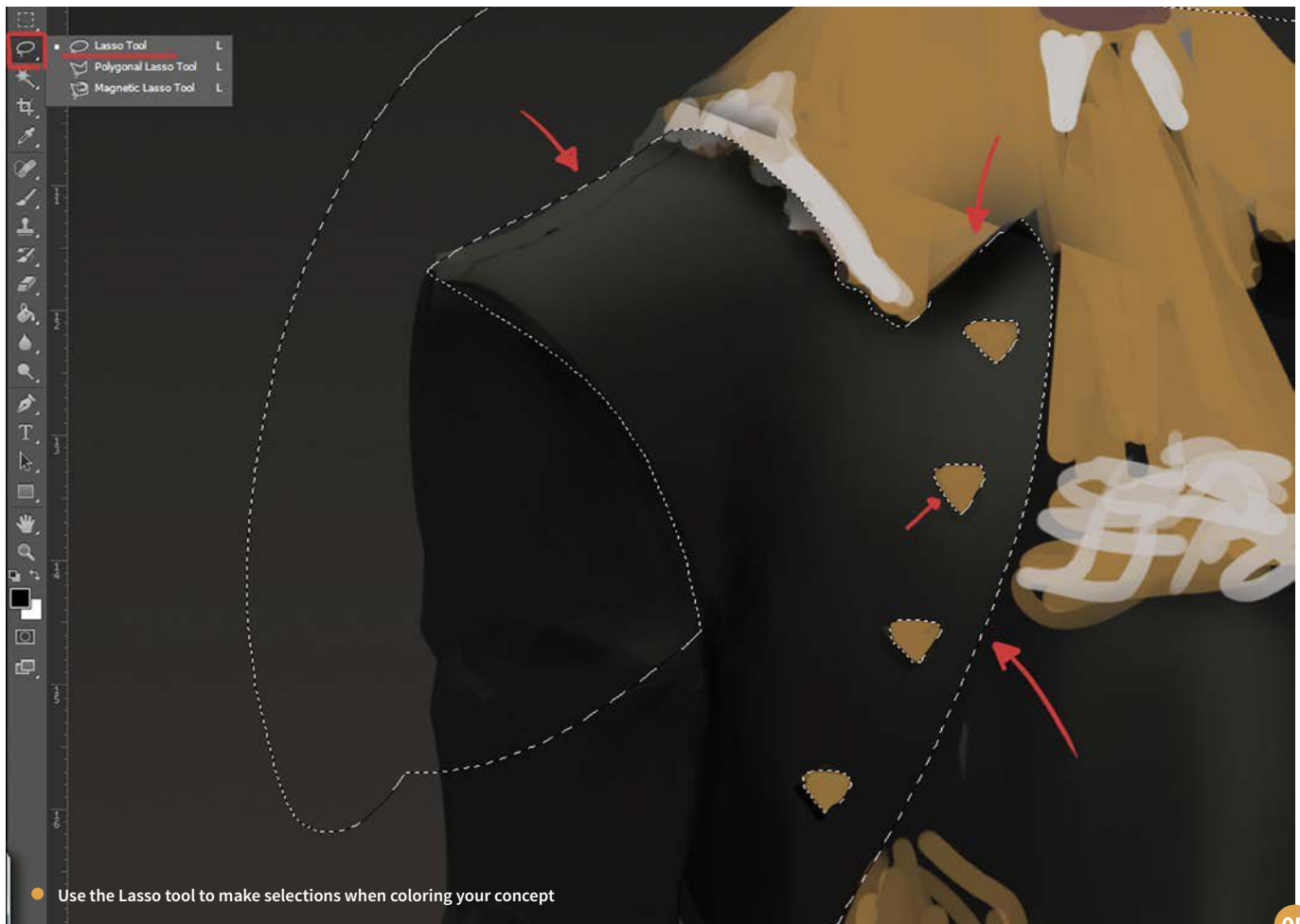
● Transition from sketches to specific design solutions based on the previous research and sketches

03



● Use your favorite brushes for the rendering of any illustration or concept. Even though there is a huge brush collection, select only five brushes

04



05

amazing! With this brush you can achieve some cool effects like those you could paint with oil or gouache. I recommend you experiment with the options for the Mixer brush and find your own ways of using it. I use a brush effect that looks like real brushstrokes and has an interesting texture.

Often young artists ask me what kind of brushes I use, but it does not really matter that much. An interesting brush is like a cherry on top of an ice cream; but if the ice cream tastes bad, no cherry will make it better. So, learn your basic painting skills and make tasty ice cream!

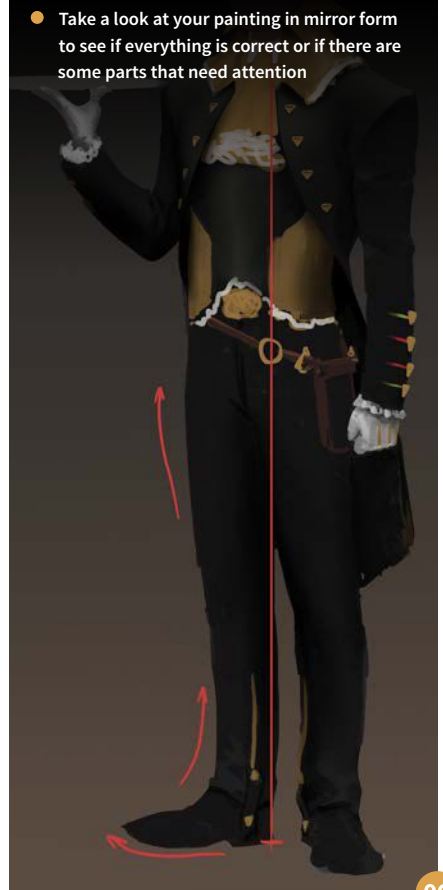
05 Color and rhythm: Now we need to color the concept. Place a line art layer above the color layer and turn the lines on and off again to see where lines and different colors will be located. Often when I need sharp edges, I use the Lasso tool, and then block in colors within the specific area. The color will not go over the selection lines so it is a very useful tool!

Regarding the colors, I decide to go with standard official black and white, and to give a touch of royalty there are golden elements. Color rhythm

is very important in any design. It is always good to use around three colors as more colors can get messy very quickly. Black, white and gold is a very good color combination. Also when light is shining on black materials, they often have a grayish dark green or blue tone to them.

06 Check on your progress: We are making awesome progress so far but we have not flipped the canvas yet! By mirroring the canvas you can see mistakes and anything that is a little bit off in your painting. In this case the butler's posture and the leg are a bit off. The posture seems to fall backwards and his leg makes him look like he is about to start moving. To correct this, his hip can be moved a bit forward and his foot moved slightly. Saving your progress is also very important!

07 Detail the jacket: At this stage we will start working on small details. The main folds on the costume are more or less established. Fabric folds can be tricky and if you have problems understanding how to paint correct folds, you can look at reference photos while painting.

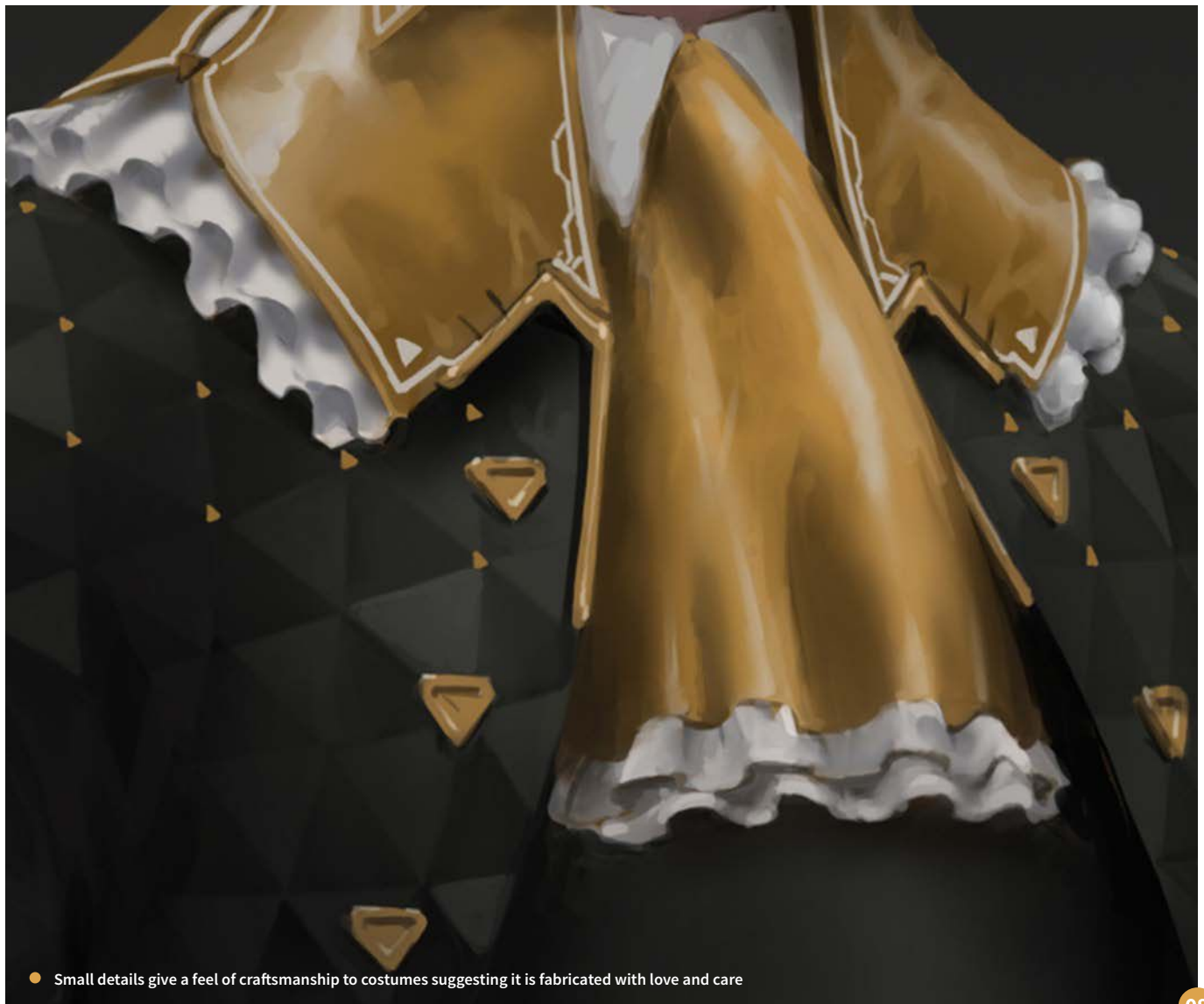
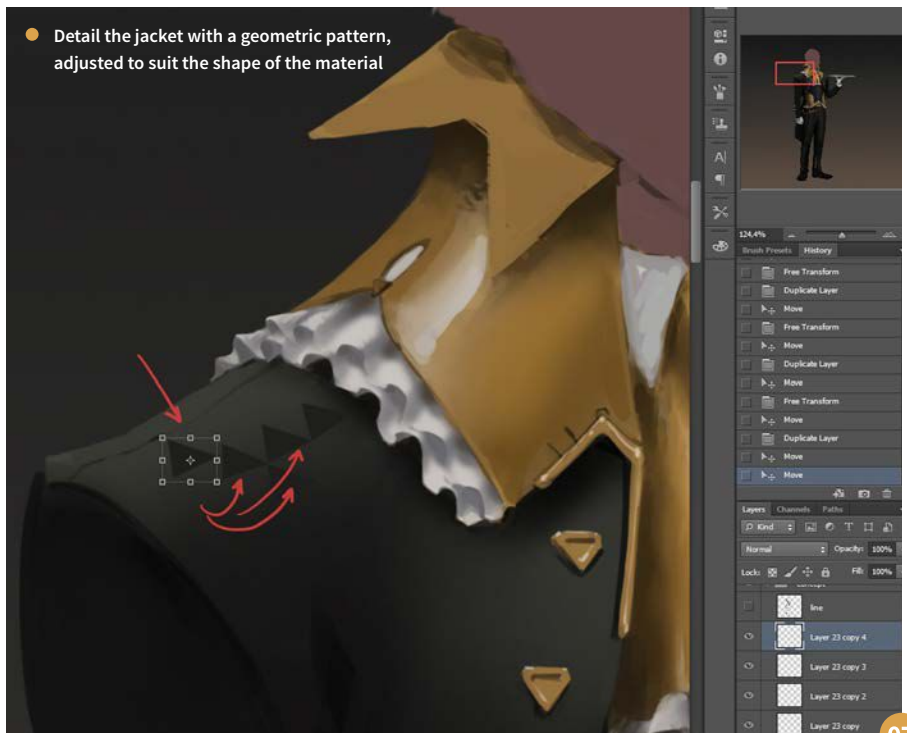


06

I decide to give this character's jacket a geometric pattern because it gives a slight futuristic touch to the costume. To do this, make a new layer and with the Lasso tool create a triangular shape. Fill the triangle with a darker tone than the jacket. Now copy this layer many times so that it creates a pattern and place it over the jacket. Adjust the size of the triangles and tones, so that the pattern appears to vanish in some spots but is more prominent in others. That gives the jackets a nice rhythm.

“If you want to make a strong design, then it is good to repeat certain elements all over the object”

08 **Further small details:** With a new layer create even more small details like golden triangular dots in between the triangular pattern on the jacket. I also add a geometric



ornament to the collar elements. If you want to make a strong design, then it is good to repeat certain elements all over the object. This gives a nice harmonic feel to the design. Be sure to have a rhythm between the design elements to avoid a messy look (unless that is the goal of your design). Render out a bit more the golden collar element – it should look like some kind of silk material that is fixed on a harder material to hold its shape.

09 Futuristic geometric patterns: For more futuristic touches add some geometric components to the lower part of the arm. The hips should have the same kind of approach because too many details on the trousers will overload the costume. So there can be some detail on the hips and not anywhere else.

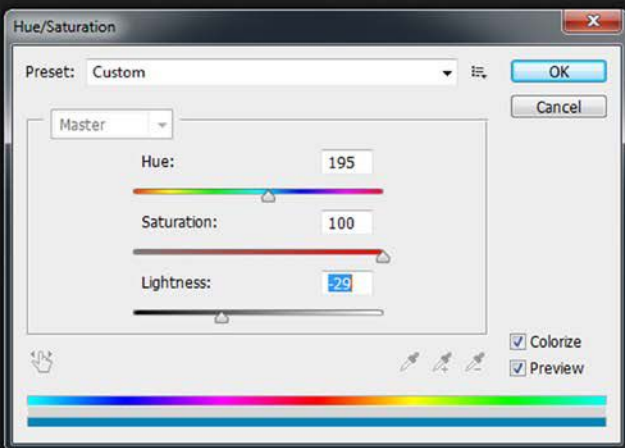
This also creates a good transition from the upper part of the costume to the lower part, which is what we want for the butler's costume in this case. I have a hexagonal style in mind here, which turned out quite interesting!

10 Costume props: The costume is quite advanced now, so we can add some props to the concept. For the

● Hexagonal style decoration gives a futuristic touch to the costume



09



● The Hue/Saturation adjustment tool is very interesting and useful when it comes to colorizing objects

10

silver platter use free stock photos and paste them to the concept with small adjustments here and there. Now add a martini glass.

To make the prop look more sci-fi, I think it would look cool to make the drink glow! You can do this by using the Lasso tool to select the drink, and then go to the Hue/Saturation menu under Image > Adjustments. Select the Colorize field, to colorize the selection. Because the drink has lots of white tones, you won't be able to colorize them, so turn down the Lightness a bit. The white tones will become darker as a result and therefore you will be able to color them. Put the Saturation slider on full power and there you go!

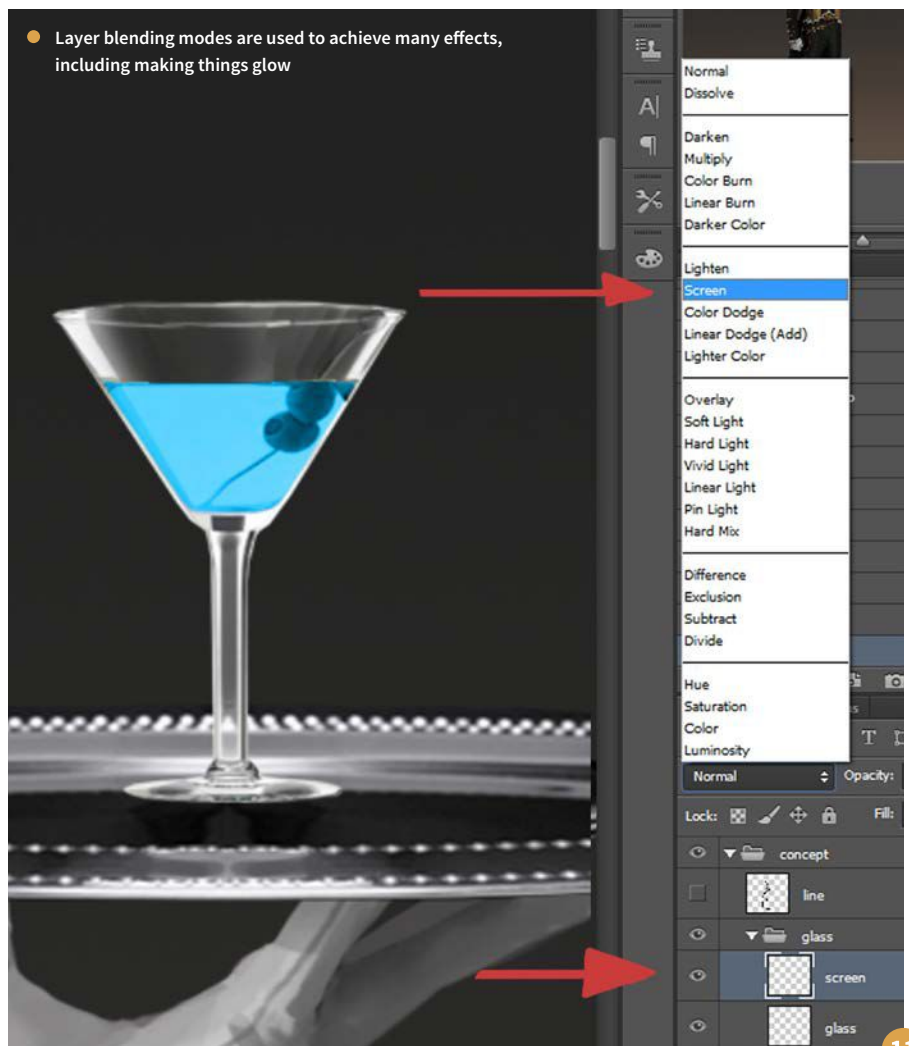
11 Make it glow!: One of my favorite techniques to make things glow is very simple. After you have colorized the drink, add a new layer on top of the drink layer. Then go to the layer blending modes and select Screen. This mode changes a layer into a transparent layer, so now you can select any color and paint on top of objects and it will look like a light source.

In this case, you can paint on top of the blue drink to make it glow. If you select a white color, it will have a white glow. However, if you pick a dark color it will not be very visible because the darker you go the less visible the Screen mode is going to be. To make a nice blue glow, pick a bright blue color and start experimenting and you will see the awesome effect!

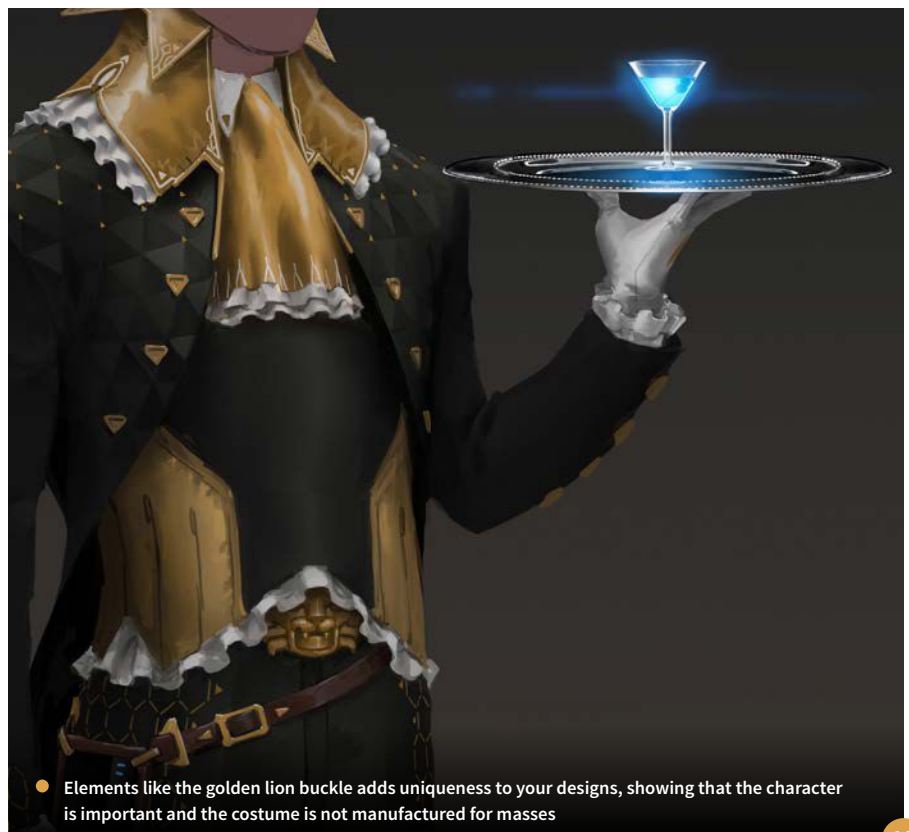
12 Lens flares: You may have noticed that if you see glowing things, they cause a really cool lens flare effect, especially in movies. There are many types of lenses, and depending ►

⚡ PRO TIPS Level of render

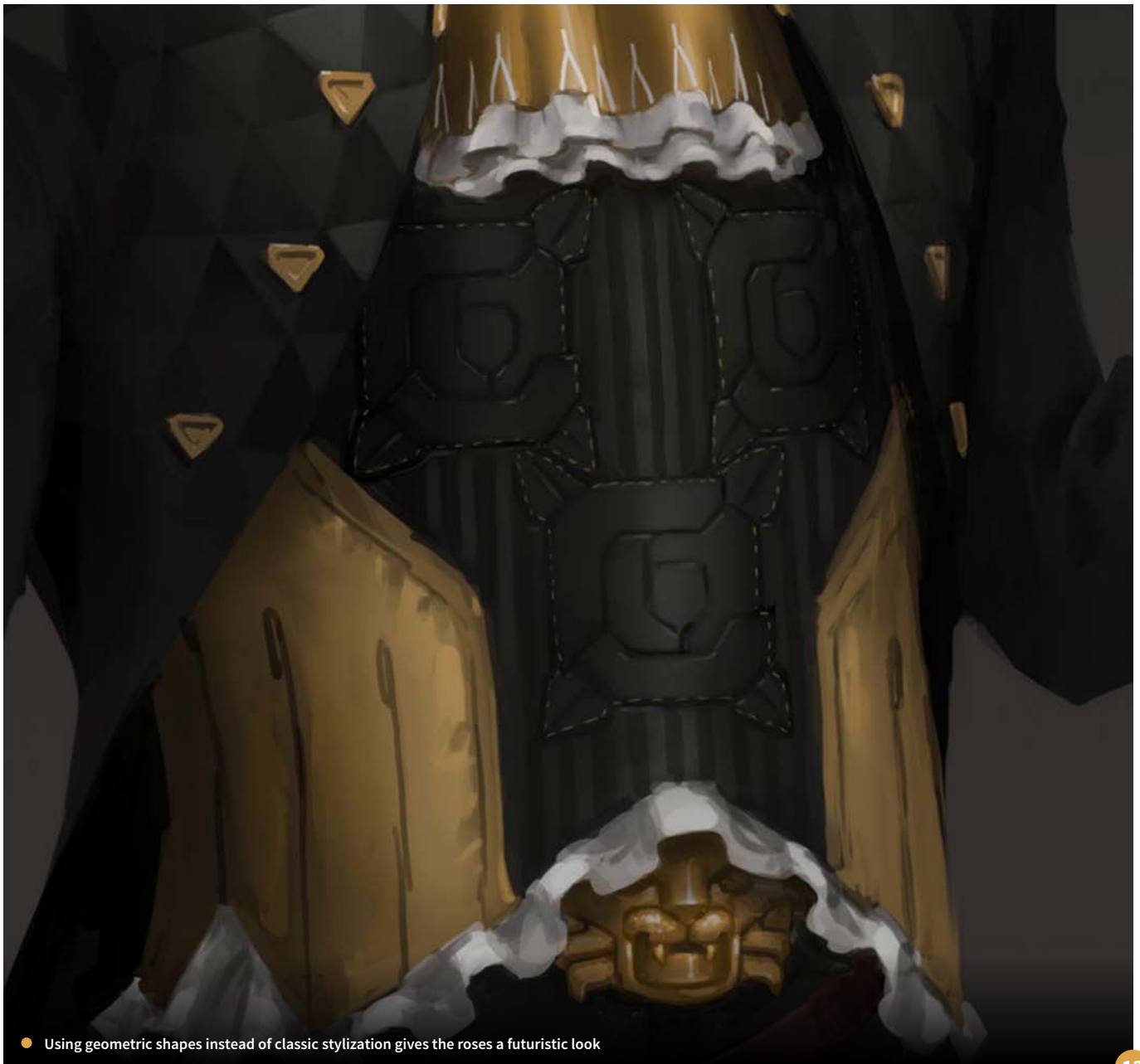
You do not need to go crazy with your rendering level. When you are working on a concept, the only thing that matters is to show the different materials. Since a concept is not a marketing illustration, your only goal is to come up with something interesting and show how it is working and what it is made of, so that later 3D artists will be able to understand your concept and model it.



11



12



● Using geometric shapes instead of classic stylization gives the roses a futuristic look

13

on the type, the flare will have a different look. One of my favorite lens flares is a horizontal line flare. Many games use lens flares to achieve a cool cinematic effect and also look very futuristic. Be careful not to overuse them however because they can make an image really noisy.

Regarding the costume, I add a stylized lion to the belt. I thought it would be cool if the household where our butler is working had some kind of old coat of arms or a family symbol.

“There are three roses on the waistcoat and they are almost interlocked into one another to symbolize the staff’s teamwork”

13 Work on the roses: Now we will define the stylized roses on the vest. We want a futuristic look which is why they should have geometric forms and shapes compared to the classical curved stylization you often see. There are three roses on the waistcoat and they are almost interlocked into one another to symbolize the staff’s teamwork. Small stitching

lines can also improve costume designs. They give the viewer a better understanding of how the costume was made and that it was made using techniques that are familiar.

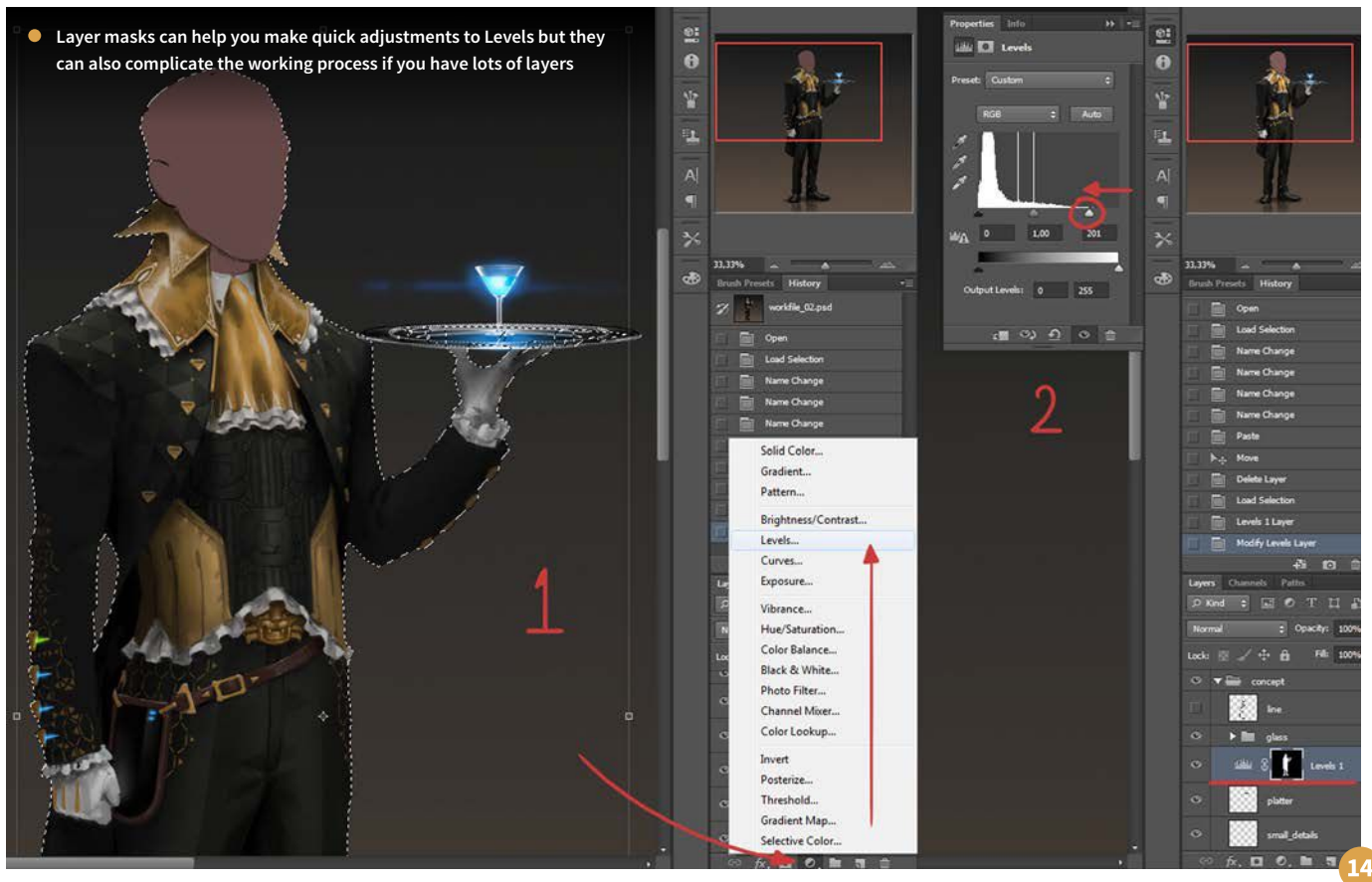
Between the roses are no complex ornaments, because it would be hard to distinguish roses among other decorations, and the eye needs



PRO TIPS

Layer effects and masks

When using different layer masks, be sure to manage the layers and work with them properly. You have to be careful because if you use too many unnecessary layers and layer masks they will start to affect all the other layers. Then if you want to make a small adjustment on one layer, you have to change the many other layers.



resting spots in every composition. If every corner of a composition is stuffed with ornaments and design, it would be a visual overload.

14 Adjust the final concept: Checking the costume again, I think that it is a bit too dark. Working with dark tones can be dangerous because other monitors can be darker or brighter than your monitor, so some details on the black costume could be lost.

Also many printers often print darker than the original image. I often have to adjust my images before printing because the final print looks too dark. As we won't change much more in the concept, use a layer mask to brighten up the whole costume.

To do this select the whole costume with the Lasso tool, then create a new adjustment layer. On the pop-up menu, select Levels. You will see that above your costume layers a new layer mask is created. Move the Levels sliders back and forth until you have the desired result.

The adjustments won't go over the layer mask and won't affect other objects that are not part of the mask. If you know that you need to continue working on the costume, make

a copy of the concept and then merge all the costume layers. Simply make it brighter with Levels or Curves. I try to avoid layer masks because they can be difficult with many layers and they can also overload the PSD file.

15 Finalize the concept: Now that the costume is done, I want to add a drone assistant for the butler to use. There is nothing really complex here, just paint a cylinder with a golden element on top.

Add the golden lion head to the top to make the costume and drone unified. Because of the lion head you also get the feeling that these drones were manufactured specifically for a rich family who can afford luxuries.

The drone assistant can have some kind of thin manipulator arms that are hidden in its body. The drone is hovering above the ground, making no noise.

The last small adjustments and additional drone design make the final concept a bit more complex and interesting. I hope this tutorial has helped and you have learned some fun new techniques! ●



14

15

The Artist



Albert Urmanov

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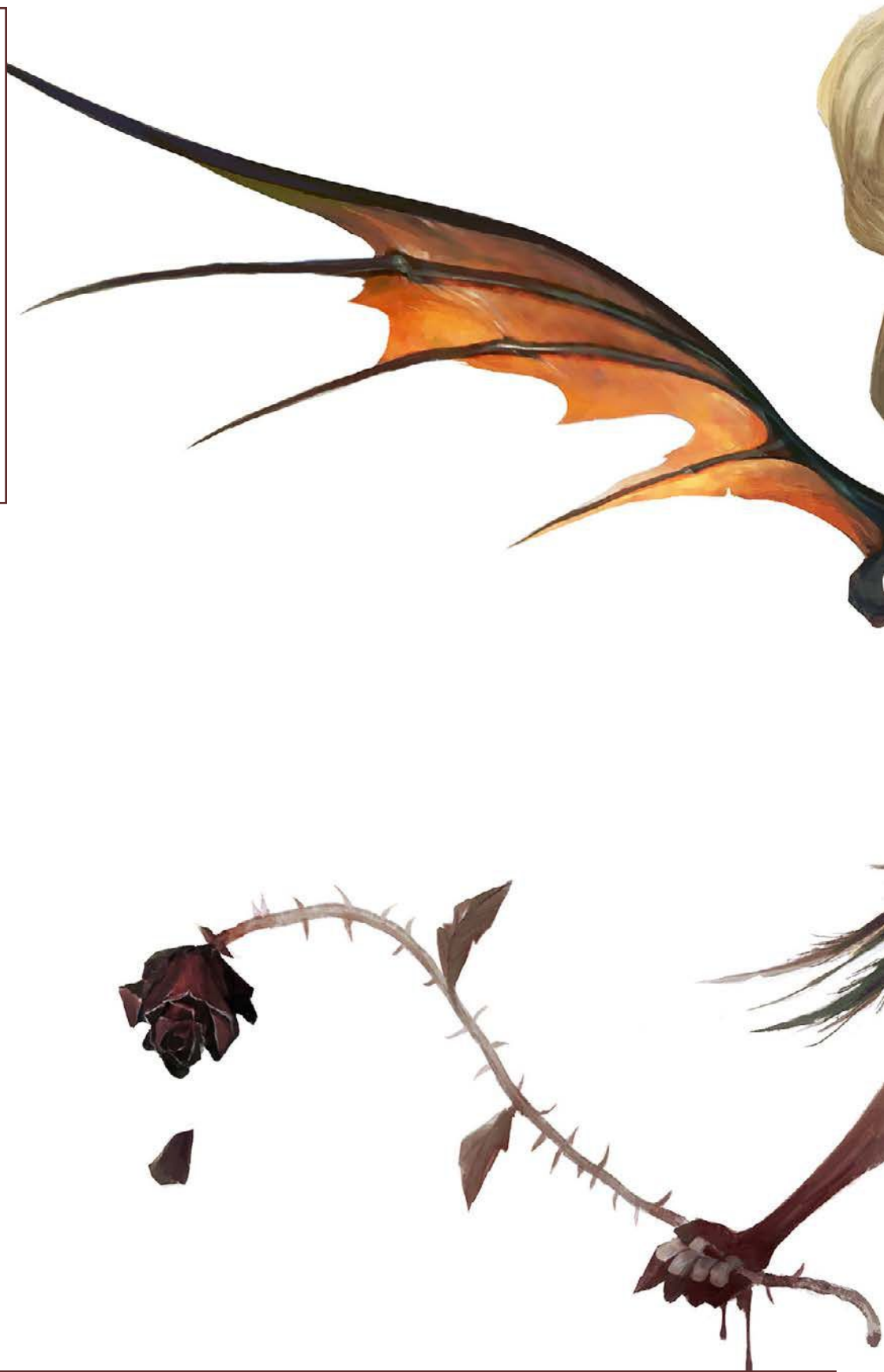
The Artist



Alexandre Chaudret
eyardt.artstation.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Alexandre Chaudret is a French concept artist and illustrator. He was previously Lead Artist at Gameloft, and he now works as a full-time freelance artist in the videogame industry.



Paint a vampire countess

Alexandre Chaudret shows how he developed story elements in his character design ▶



Learn to use a small element of risk to your advantage...

I have always imagined character design to be like a portal. When you succeed in creating the design, based on the story of the character, you have fulfilled its essence and reason to be. So the character itself may pass through the portal and live in the imagination of your audience. Sometimes, that alchemy doesn't take place, and the portal stays shut down. But sometimes, it works perfectly well, and the character lives its own life of legends and stories through thousands of eyes, even briefly.

I'm guessing you are wandering "what's that weirdo talking about?" but this is my way of proceeding. I focus on the creation and the story beneath the design before the technique. We will see through this article how I tried to open the imaginary portal for *The Countess*, a delightful vampire admiring her eternal youth through her madness.

01 A glimpse in the dark: "Oh my, oh my, Beauty is eternal! Oh my, oh my, So is Madness!" *The countess, singing in front of her mirror.*

This was the short story for my design; a few words that stuck in my head. I knew I wanted a vampire, and I knew I wanted an opposition between eternal beauty and mad ugliness. I threw out some lines to search for my composition; a first sparkle of life for this undead lady. Everything was open to change at this point, but the gesture, feeling and the first design ideas were already popping out.

"I prefer to paint my designs as a whole with only one layer at the time"

02 From chaos to shapes: I am kind of a "one layer guy" except in specific job situations when it is necessary for the client. I prefer to paint my designs as a whole with only one layer at a time, collapsing everything periodically. That way, I feel I can have a great liberty in my gesture, similar to traditional painting, with a little element of risk with a "repaint and rebuild" effect.

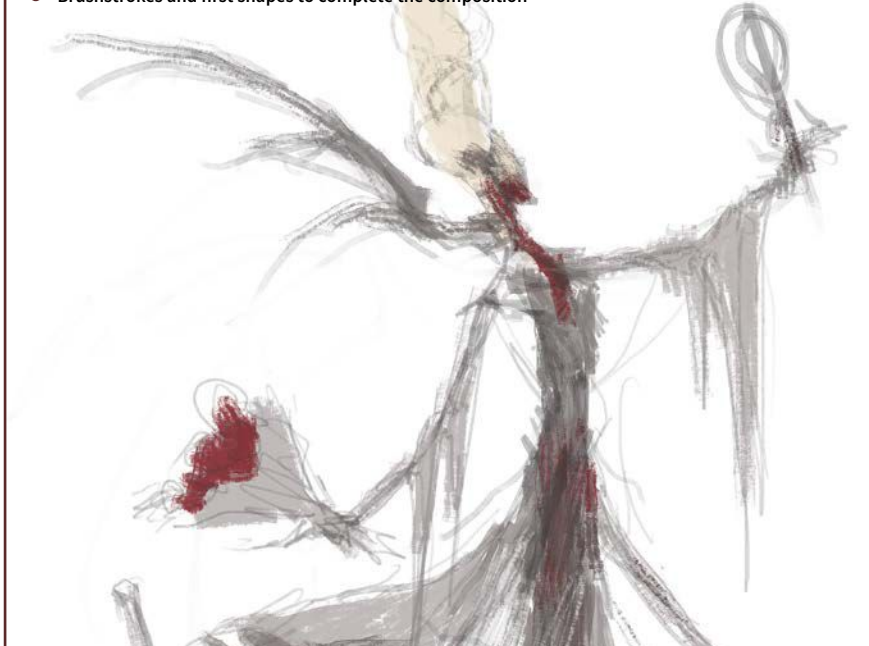
At this stage, I used very messy brushes which gave texture and chaotic shapes within

● Blocking a line sketch for composition and global feeling of the character



01

● Brushstrokes and first shapes to complete the composition



02

my blocked structure. A white background helped me to keep my outline silhouette strong throughout, by simply painting in white to erase any undesired strokes.

03 Choices engraved in stone: This was the step for choices, and where the design did not evolve too much. At this stage, I knew which elements would be done, even if I kept a space for spontaneous addition. Never step back from a good idea, even if it means rebuilding a lot of the image.

I still used some imprecise brushes, such as some very furry brushes, in order to keep my strokes and traditional painting feeling accurate.

04 Skull, beauty and madness: This was a big step for refining and detailing. I looked at references and repainted the countess's skull, detailing as much as possible. I took a Marie Antoinette reference for the hair cut. This level of detail was my guide when accomplishing the rest of the painting.

My choice of using a skull in the design was to improve the contradiction between eternal youth and beauty. As you can see, I was always focusing on the main idea at the lowest level of the design.

The winged scarf was an element of design to bring back the common bat-like imagery of vampires and add a touch of vibrant color with the orange and red. ►



● Design decisions and confirmation

03



● Detailing the skull and the winged scarf with references

04



● Refining the dress and harmonization of color tones

05



● Enjoying the long detailing phase through the whole painting

06

“My choice of using a skull on the design was to improve the contradiction between eternal youth and beauty”

05 A dress for the countess: I finished the detailing of the dress, adding some elements of design to recall the Victorian vampire imagery. I didn’t hesitate to go into very deep detail as this gave depth to the design and underlined the sophistication of the character. Everything was done to bring the character to life.

I harmonized the color tones of my elements with a simple curves adjustment, playing with the RGB curves independently of each other.

It was a subtle way to give some common flavor to all the elements of the design.

06 The long journey of refining: This was probably the longest step, and curiously, also the easiest one: refining. At this moment, I created one single layer above the whole painting, took one single, simple brush (I often use the default Photoshop round brush, or a calligraphy rectangle brush) and simply traveled around the whole design. I sharpened every spot I saw and every piece that needed to be detailed.

I worked in a kind of automatic-control mindset, moving through the canvas with no purpose, again and again. That was when I rendered

the clothes, and sharpened the background and tombs. I often finish this process by using the Lasso or Pen tool to get perfectly sharp areas, with great precision. I always try to have a polished piece as although a rough illustration is fine in the flow of a production, if the illustration itself is the final product, you have to push it as far as possible.

“I made some small lighting changes, with a very smooth brush and layers in Overlay or Color Dodge”

07 The final countdown: This was nearly the end. I made some small

lighting changes, with a very smooth brush and layers in Overlay or Color Dodge. I also added a few strokes in Multiply with a low opacity, for the shadows and occlusion. Those small last steps just increased the depth of the piece and gave the countess more overall volume.

One of the best pieces of advice I ever had from an Art Director was: once you have finished a character, look at your piece. Would you buy a statue or figurine of it to put it on your desk? If not, that means you are not finished. Since I heard this advice, it has been my final question for each of my designs.

08 Beyond the portal: I like to work in series, meaning I use the same codes and trends for several of my characters. I like to imagine their interactions, animation, habits, and backgrounds... to see them live beyond the portal I mentioned earlier.

As a conclusion to this making-of, here are a few words on my way of seeing art in general: we often hear and read a lot on techniques and ways to achieve a goal, a process, or how to resolve an issue. But I like to think that my main focus is the creation, and therefore answering the questions "What do I want to tell? What do I want others to see? And what do I want them to feel?" There are no good recipes for making art, just different branches of different trees in a huge forest of ideas. Have fun while painting and be honest with your characters. Love them and they will love you in return. ●



● Final post-process and lighting, for final rendering!

07

● An example of three characters Alexandre created in the same universe



08

The Artist



Alexandre Chaudret
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Ruin City

by Florian de Gesincourt

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The Artist



Florian de Gesincourt
degessart.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Florian de Gesincourt is a freelance concept artist from Rennes, France. His primary focus is concept design, illustration and environment design for films, videogames, collectible card games and other entertainment media.

This artwork was done originally for an online challenge. I do challenges just for fun and for the topic. This topic was *Game of Thrones*. I love doing environments; this is what I practice all the time. I spent a while searching for many references that would fit the theme. At first I considered doing a red tree, the weirwood, in the middle of some very old ruins. But after I did some sketches, I couldn't find the right composition. I couldn't depict exactly what was in my mind. I did quite a few sketches before finally getting an interesting idea.

I had a few days' break before working on my final picture. When I got back to my sketch, I realized the sketch wasn't okay – it wasn't so great. I could see I was making many mistakes! So I decided to paint for the last time over my sketch, delete the tree and make a huge ruined city with an ancient cathedral in the middle.

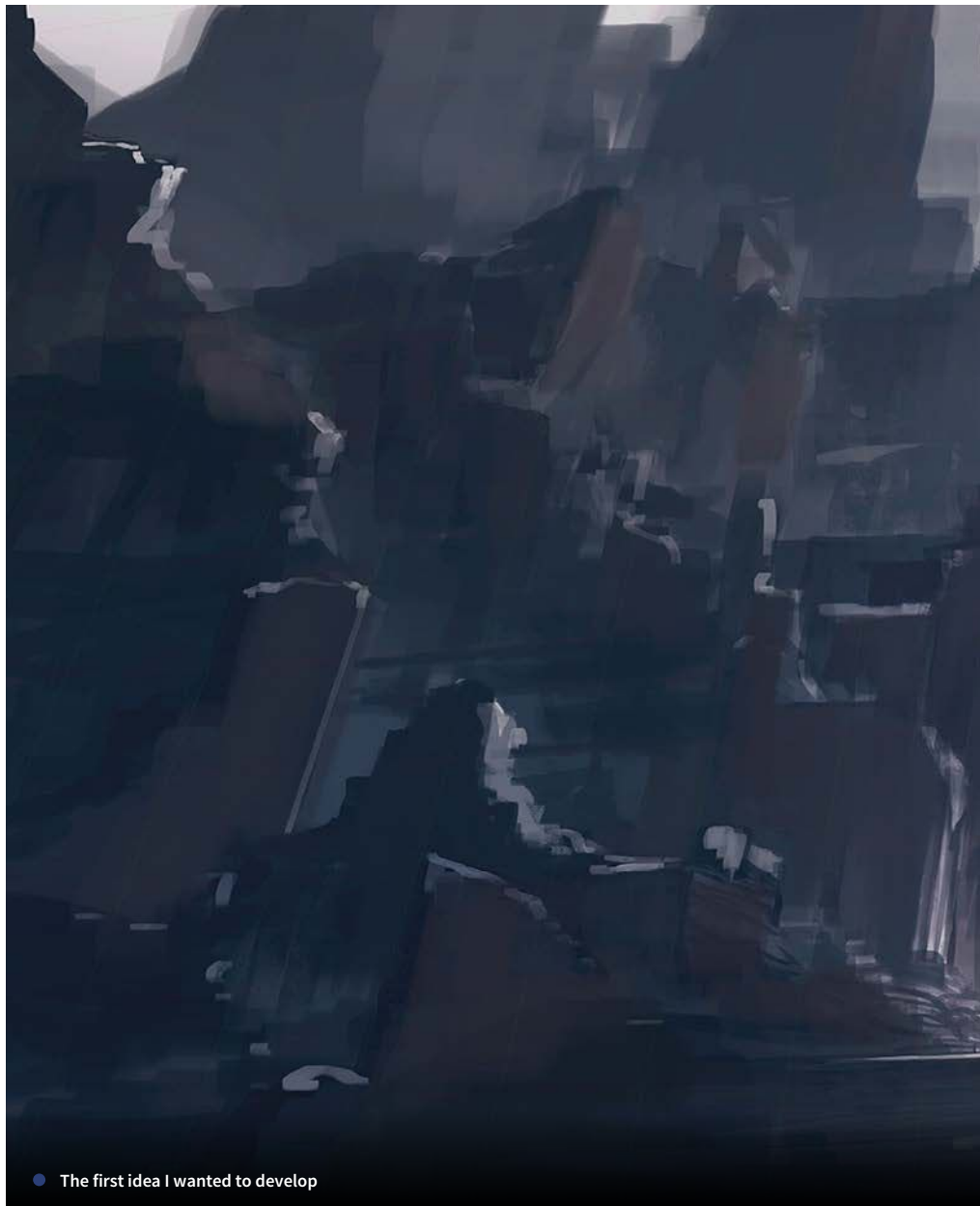
Elaborate the sketch

Before starting any painting, I like to gather together as many references as I can. This helps me a lot, especially when I have no idea what I'm going to paint. I mainly use the internet, looking at various photography websites to find some nice textures and architecture. I save all the pictures that inspire me and then make a mood board. When I have enough references, I start painting thumbnails with my references to the side.

I don't have one specific technique to begin a sketch. Sometimes I can start painting in full with some random brushes, or I do some photo-bashing plus a paint-over. Often I start painting, and when I want to focus on a particular point, then I may add some photos to my painting. One thing I always do is be self-critical while painting, or once the sketch is done. I analyze what is good or what I have to work on (composition, lighting, color, eye movement and so on).

Final image processing

This is my favorite part: starting the final image processing. (It doesn't happen to me on every painting!) To start making a final picture I have to like my sketches. I do so many sketches all the time, and maybe after twenty sketches I'll finish one... I wish I could directly have an idea and make it a final image, but that very rarely happens. ►

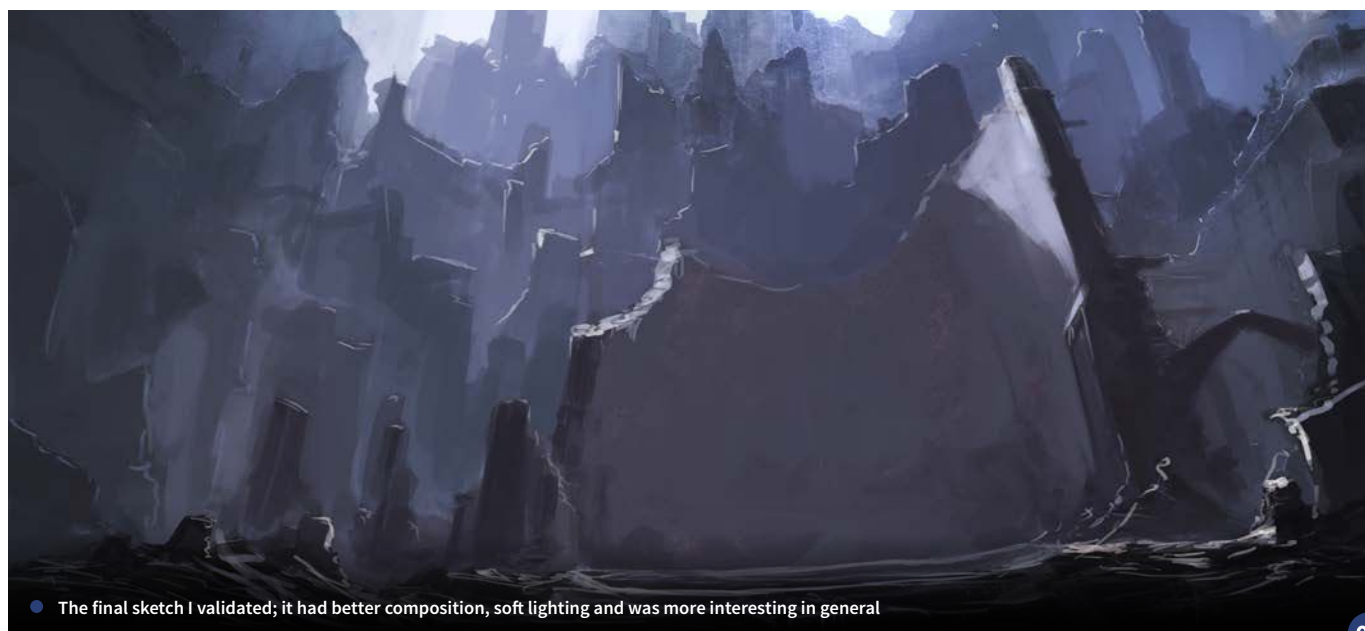




01



02



• The final sketch I validated; it had better composition, soft lighting and was more interesting in general

03

The previous sketch was okay, so I needed to go into detail. I started by adding some photos to my main focus: the cathedral. I decided to work mainly on this part, to add details with some photos in Soft Light blending mode by painting on them and finding nice shapes. I took my time during this process, choosing carefully which photos I wanted to use and applied them quite roughly because I knew I would paint over the details. The photos also helped me with the texturing and picking the right colors.

Repeating

Once the cathedral was done with the quality and level of details I wanted to reach, I started making the rest of the city. First, I needed to paint the right and left side of the picture. I wanted to tell a story.

I wanted people to imagine this place and understand how the city worked in ancient times. When I start going into details, I imagine what people were doing at this place, what was the purpose of this or that building. If I can imagine it, then it is a lot easier to paint it.

For the technique of detailing, it was the same as before: I painted a shape and added photos to it using a blending mode, deleting the part of the photo I didn't want and painting over it to complete the building. In general, I only use two or three photos for a whole painting, and this was no exception.

Completing the scene

I often work with only one layer in Photoshop. I merge everything together for my computer



● Working closely on details

04



● Cathedral done, time to work on other parts of the picture

05



● What was this place before? Maybe an ancient abbey? Maybe a garden? A green sanctuary, perhaps? Try to imagine it

06

to be faster. But when you have a picture like this to do, you need some layers to paint behind some objects. That was a problem for me, so I decided to cut out all the middle ground to a new layer to be able to work on the background. To do that I used the Pen tool. I could easily cut some nice details.

Once the middle ground was on a new layer, I could add blur details to the background, refine some building shapes and work more on the lighting and highlights. To add the final details (which were in my mind all the time while I was painting) I added some elements to the painting to re-enforce the mood.

I also added clouds that I painted softly (for some volume and depth) then I added some birds to bring life to the dead city. This place was abandoned but still peaceful. To finish up the painting, I did a bit of careful color correction with the levels and the color balance, then signed it off – and the picture was done.

“Even if you feel you won’t succeed, continue to paint and you might just surprise yourself”

Push through

I have to say, I am still very happy with this image. I was surprised by the quality I reached, and the time that it took me. I never expected it, but I understand how I did it and now I’m using the same technique all the time



● Details are important, such as a higher contrast in the foreground, lighter in the background, with overlapping architecture

07



● I cut out my middle ground in order to have it on a separate layer

08

(and improving it). When I first completed the image I wasn’t in a good mood, I was in the mood “Oh I’m bad, I won’t succeed.” You know this mood, don’t you? All artists have this moment – it’s quite depressing.

But when this painting was done it pushed me a lot! I had so much feedback for this

image – including some awards! It was also published on some big art websites, which motivated me to continue painting.

This artwork is pinned to my wall above my screen to constantly remind me that, even if you don’t feel good, even if you feel you won’t succeed, continue to paint and you might just surprise yourself. ●



● Adding some mood, clouds, birds and color correction

09



The Artist



Florian de Gesincourt
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